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VOL 18 | ISSUE 12 | DECEMBER 2015

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JACK PYKE
OF ENGLAND

Late Licence

Well, it finally happened! I got my FAC renewal visit last week, which was three months late; it seems my licensing department is a little over worked and has been for some time! I was issued a temporary licence on the date of the expiry of my original, no problem? Well yes as a matter of fact, as though I could still possess my firearms I had to transfer all my expanding (Sect 5) ammo onto an RFD, as the temporary permit did not allow me to possess it, so no hunting. The FEO came round and we started through my file, which was massive, well I have had a ticket for over 30-years. The checks were thorough and pretty logical and on reflection I have to say I did not mind all the questions, some of which were quite personal, as to drinking habits etc. Equally, I was asked why I had changed one of my referees and about someone who gave my address to try and dodge a driving offence, as both of these put red flags up at HQ. Both were explained to his satisfaction, but on reflection it pays to be cautious, after all we are talking firearms. It all went well and I'm expecting my latest ticket by the end of the month; now I can start filling up those new slots and get back to the hunting!

Pete Moore



P10 **SEASONAL SELECTION**
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 VOL 18 | ISSUE 12 | DECEMBER 2015 **£3.75**

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WA HL
THE LATEST MILITARY LOOK-A-LIKE 22 RIMFIRE

FIRST UK TEST

P20
AFFORDABLE & EFFECTIVE!
 Photon 6.5x50 digital NV scope

FIRST UK TEST

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EXTREME PERFORMANCE PCP
 FX Boss - 850 fps/75 ft/lbs with a 30" cal pellet;
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Shooting SPORTS

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ON SALE

First Friday of the month

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Bruce Potts considers the old 'triple deuce' (222 Remington) and reckons it's still got what it takes!

110 RELOADING

Wheelwrite rounds up some reloading Christmas presents

Staggering price

Despite attracting an estimate of just £500-700, Lot 1248, a charming but unremarkable rifle by W.W. Greener, fetched a staggering £5,100 at Holt's Auctioneers' September sale in London. The cased .22LR Martini-action takedown sporting rifle features a 25", Nitro-reproved barrel and is mounted with a Carl Zeiss Zielklein telescopic sight. "I first saw this little rifle in 2013 at one of my West Country valuation days," explained Senior Valuer Roland Elworthy, adding: "My estimate was sensibly conservative and I

told the owner he could expect a hammer price of £700-800, perhaps a little more if someone really wanted it. As you can imagine, the room fell silent when bidding reached £5,000, what a great price! So why did the Greener sell so high? The simple answer is testosterone! The thrill of the chase and the burning desire to win, almost at any cost. We see it regularly and it's a great illustration of male nature, we all have it in us!" Holt's next sale is on the 10th of December 2015.

Visit: www.holtsauctioneers.com.



This little Greener single shot 22LR went for an amazing £5,100!

BASC calls for a fair deal for shooting

BASC has called for comprehensive recognition and support for shooting, in response to a government review of the future of this sport in England. In a detailed response to the Department for Culture Media and Sports (DCMS) consultation, 'A New Strategy for Sport', BASC seeks to put shooting on the same footing as other major sports. The association puts forward the case for widening access to shooting, especially for young people, with schools taking a more balanced approach, introductory days and centres of excellence, where talented shooters are provided with the highest quality training. The response also calls for legislative changes to enable British target pistol shooters to participate on a level field with other international teams. The response urges government to recognise the vital role of representative bodies, like BASC, to provide sporting opportunities and improve the nation's well-being by making sport an integral part of our everyday lives.

Royal Armouries wins bidding war for 'Biggles' shotgun

A Winchester shotgun, once owned by Air Commodore Cecil George 'Wiggles' Wigglesworth, who inspired the famous Biggles children books, has been bought by The Royal Armouries in Leeds, after it sold for £2,200 at Holt's Auctioneers' September sale. With an estimate of just £800-1,200, Lot 1700 attracted a lot of attention after it was displayed at the CLA Game Fair earlier this year. The 12-bore 'Model 21' single-trigger boxlock ejector has been in the family since Wiggles died in 1961, but only used a handful of times. "On the day of the auction, this modest little gun had obviously caught the imagination of a number of bidders and the bidding rose quickly to over double its predicted high estimate," explained Holt's Auctioneers' Chris Beaumont, adding: "The best of it was that the 'last man standing' in the bidding war and the successful buyer was none other than Mark Murray-Flutter, Senior Curator to The Royal Armouries. The story will not disappear into the unknown, but now belongs to the nation for us all to be able to enjoy."



Living fiction, the Biggles' shotgun

NV not just for Christmas

We've just been speaking to Scott Country, probably the UK's biggest retailer of night vision gear and they will be sending us down one of the latest ATN X-Sights, the 5-18 for testing, so the review should be in the next issue. Still with NV, Scott Country has selected some of their top sellers, which might tempt you at this time of year. Pulsar Apex XD75 Thermal Riflescope (3-6 magnification) - £3799.99, ATN X Sight 5-18x Day/Night Riflescope - £779, Pulsar Quantum XD50S Thermal Imager (hand held) - £2999.99, Nite Site Digital Night Vision - starting at £449 for Viper, £639 for Wolf, £849 for Eagle, and £949 for Spotter



The ATN X-Sight 5-18, just one of the many NV devices available from Scott Country

Extreme, Yukon Photon XT 6.5x50 Night Vision Riflescope with free IR illuminator - £419.

Contact: Scott Country, 01556 50 3587, www.scottcountry.co.uk

Longthorne helps heroes!

Lancashire-based Longthorne Gunmakers were honoured to host a visit from 'Help for Heroes' on Saturday the 19th of September. The party, consisting of 10 Gentlemen and 2 Ladies, arrived in two groups from Hampshire and Catterick at 10.30 to a full English BBQ breakfast; they were then treated to a tour of the company's workshop and a talk by James Longthorne Stewart. There then followed a shooting session, which was supervised by James and assisted by John Williamson. Sam and Lisa Slinger of Ribblebank Sporting Clays kindly donated both the venue and the traps, and the group of 'Heroes' had a chance to shoot a Longthorne gun and 'let their hair' down before travelling home. This is the second such visit by 'Help for



Longthorne Gunmakers, doing their bit for some real heroes!

Heroes' and Longthorne are very much looking forward to next years visit at their new factory in Northampton.

Contact: Longthorne Gunmakers, 01772 811215, www.longthorneguns.com

Future of the CLA Game Fair

The CLA regrets that it will no longer run the annual CLA Game Fair. This decision includes cancelling the planned event scheduled to be at Ragley Hall in 2016. The decision has been taken by the CLA Board after the event failed to generate enough income in each of the last three years. Director General of the CLA Helen Woolley said: "The Game Fair is an important and well loved event with a long tradition. It is a difficult decision that we deeply regret having to take. We are extremely proud

of the Game Fairs that we have put on in recent years and we are grateful to our Game Fair team that have delivered these high quality, professional, events. Unfortunately an increasingly crowded summer calendar of outdoor events has contributed to falling attendance. This has led to the event failing to generate enough income and has made the event financially unsustainable. Over the last three years the Board made the decision to invest in the Game Fair because of our strong desire to turn the event

around. We have been able to make this investment because of the otherwise robust financial position of the CLA. However we can no longer ask CLA members to allow their membership subscriptions to underwrite the losses the event makes. We are clear that the Game Fair can no longer be run by the CLA in its current form. We will, however, begin a period of consultation in which we will invite proposals from other organisations on how the Game Fair might be able to continue."

UK Custom Shop

The UK Custom Shop, home of Wildcat Rifles and moderators, has just re-launched their website. To say it has had a complete overhaul is an understatement, as it now centres on its Wildcat moderator brand, featuring all of the parts and accessories for the full range. The photography is excellent and really illustrates the product, equally the on-line shop area is better laid out and easy to navigate! There's also a photo gallery (send in your pics of you with your gun and Wildcat moddy), customer reviews and a section on moderator information and maintenance. It's a much more user-friendly and visually pleasing website that brings the brand to the fore. Customers are left in no doubt as to what they can buy, be it complete moderators or components; it's possible to swap items like the



UK Custom Shop has a new website which is really worth a look!

diffuser (baffle system) and bridge (connecting unit/thread) to mix and match on calibres etc. With four different models to choose from, covering all calibre needs and a great pricing structure, if you're looking for a moddy check out what UK Custom Shop/Wildcat Moderators has to offer.

Contact: UK Custom Shop, 01905 797060 www.wildcatrifles.co.uk



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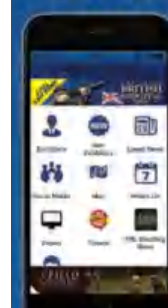
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SS12.15/19/r

THIS MONTH IN BRIEF

NEW COYOTE

After listening to much feedback from the industry and buying public, the GAMO Coyote Tactical will from the 1st November be available without the Fixed Whisper Maxim Silencer. A 1½" UNF threaded, cold hammer forged barrel will be fitted, to enable a moderator to be fitted if desired and will come as standard with muzzle break. RRP will remain the same at £399.00.

DEAR CSR SHOOTER

The NRA have set up a Facebook Page for the Civilian Service Rifle (CSR) Winter League and is the place to find out about upcoming CSR events at Bisley and elsewhere, ask questions or find information about this dynamic shooting sport. Please take a look and like the page to be sure to receive the latest updates. NRA CSR Winter League

NEW STS CATALOGUE

The STS catalogue includes collectors ranges such as bowie knives, and new models including Azero and Camillus. With other popular brands including Buck, Leatherman, Cudeman, EKA and of course Blade Tech, including Classics and the new G2. The catalogue illustrates a selection of product on offer and the full range can be viewed on their website, along with a selection of Antique, pre-owned and collectible knives and tools.

Contact: STS North Wales, 01492 640 664 www.sportingcutlery.co.uk sales@stsnorthwales.co.uk

CORBETT'S GAME BOOK

Gunmaker John Rigby & Co. has been gifted an extremely rare book by legendary big game hunter Jim Corbett for its collection. The paperback, entitled 'Jungle Stories', was loaned to Rigby by Robert Bucknell after he attended a standing-room-only presentation by Rigby's Managing Director Marc Newton, where he spoke about his recent acquisition of Corbett's famous .275 Rigby bolt-action rifle. All Corbett memorabilia is available to view at the Rigby showroom in London.

Contact: John Rigby & Co, 0207 720 0757

Visit: www.johnrigbyandco.com.

Edgars sponsors top gallery rifle and pistol shooter

Edgar Brothers has sponsored Jonny Cormie, with a GSG 1911 long-barrelled .22 semi-automatic pistol and Fiocchi High Velocity ammunition. Jonny (29) has been shooting for most of his life and competing since he joined the Army Cadets at the age of 13, which culminated in a place on the British Cadet Rifle Team. He now competes in Gallery Rifle and pistol shooting and is currently Scotland Gallery Rifle Team Captain and a member of the Great Britain Team. In 2013 he took the title of Gallery Rifle Small Bore



Jonny Cormie is being sponsored by Edgar Brothers with a GSG 1911 LBP and Fiocchi rimfire ammo

National Champion. He has won events at the Phoenix, Gallery Rifle National Championships and the Irish Open. Recently he became the 2015 Gallery Rifle Centrefire National Champion

and 1500 Small Bore National Champion. Derek Edgar, Managing Director of Edgar Brothers, commented: "We've been amazed by the response to the GSG long-barrelled pistol and sold the first shipment before they even arrived in the country. We are also delighted to be able to sponsor Jonny Cormie, one of the country's best .22 pistol and rifle shooters and look forward to supporting him in his quest to win many more competitions."

Visit www.shootingsports.edgarbrothers.com

Accuracy and quality as standard!

Alan Rhone has just announced that they will be importing and distributing the prestigious Schultz and Larsen brand of rifles from Denmark. Stepping up their UK profile, they have launched a dedicated website- www.greatdanerifles.com and a new dealer network. Two of the country's most well-known and reputable Firearms Dealers; Steve Beaty (Ivythorn Sporting) and Mike Norris (Brock & Norris), are the first to join. Established in 1889, Schultz & Larsen began producing rifles with an emphasis on first class craftsmanship and the highest degree of accuracy. The company is unique in that they are the only hunting rifle producer that choose to use cut rifled barrels. This, coupled with the use of an extremely rigid receiver and a bolt



Schultz and Larsen; an old Name but one that still impresses with top quality build and performance

that locks directly into the barrel, ensures that the quality, accuracy and strength of each rifle remains steadfast. We have been lucky enough to get an S&L Victory (switch barrel) to test in the next issue. Editor Pete Moore, after a preliminary shoot said: "a beautiful and classic design that can really shoot, and like the rest of the range it's exceptionally well priced too."

Contacts: Alan Rhone Ltd, (0)1978 66 00 01, www.alanrhone.com

Visit www.greatdanerifles.com

Swiss Black Powder

Henry Krank are pleased to announce that they are now importers and stockists of Swiss Black Powder. As all black powder shooters will know, Swiss powder is the superior product on the market. It is the first choice for both competition and recreational shooters for its high performance. Made from Alder Buckthorn charcoal, long considered the best wood for the job and manufactured in small batches, Swiss powder burns cleaner and more consistently than any other brand available.

The range consists of:

- Swiss No.1 (4FG, suitable for muzzle loading pistols) £58 per 1kg/2.2lbs
 - Swiss No.2 (3FG, suitable for pistols and smaller muzzle loading rifles) £58 per 1kg/2.2lbs
 - Swiss No.3 (2FG, suitable for most muzzle loading rifles and larger pistols) £58 per 1kg/2.2lbs
 - Swiss No.4 (1 1/2 FG suitable for a wide variety of muzzle loaders, Krank's most popular black powder) £58 per 1kg/2.2lbs
 - Swiss No.5 (1FG, suitable for larger calibre muzzle loaders and above) £58 per 1kg/2.2lbs
 - Swiss OB Fuse Powder (OB, suitable for fuse and pan priming only) £45 per 250g
- Priced competitively, Swiss powder is certainly an investment for any black powder enthusiast.
- Available in store upon production of valid Black Powder/RCA documents, mail order but you must first send your original documents by post. Please email sales@henrykrank.com or phone 0113 2565 167 for further details.



B725 HUNTER UK BLACK GOLD 20G

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CHRISTMAS GENERAL PRODUCTS

£153

EFFECTIVE PERFORMER

The Danubia, Dorr DJE-600 laser rangefinder offers a spec of 6x25. On top are the selection and firing buttons, readout is selectable (yards/metres) and there are three modes: RAIN will laze through rain at 60m +, REFL recommended for dust and smoky conditions and 150m; does not register on small items at longer distances. It runs on a CRS battery and comes with lanyard and case. Maximum effective range is 600m; the reticule shows a low, wide cross with a circular aiming mark and displays laser quality, low battery and yards/meters. Overall a cost-effective design!

Price: £153

Contact: RUAG Ammotec UK Ltd, 01579 362319 (for nearest stockists)

Switch Blade...

Fed up with having to re-sharpen your knife after every outing? If so, the new Havalon knife range is the answer. Available in two models, there's a small version suitable for game from rabbits to deer, whilst the larger is offered with normal, filleting or saw blade, which are interchangeable between models. Each blade is surgically sharp and spares are supplied along with a Cordura pouch to give a complete skinning and game prep tool.

Prices: £37.40 to £61.20.

Contact: JMS Arms on 01444 400 126 or 07771 962 121, www.havalonknives.co.uk

THAT'S HANDY Harry!

Cluson's latest design is the Clulite PLR-500 Long Ranger LED Pistol Light. It includes a 1200-lumen lamp with CREE T6 LED, red filter, mains and vehicle chargers with a range of 500m (un-filtered). The head measures 150mm in diameter, with a pistol grip handle with rubberised switch. It weighs 448-grams and is fitted with special, light weight, lithium-ion batteries with an estimated run time of up to 3 hours. Recharge time is approximately 8 hours.

Price: £61.20 including P+P

Contact: Cluson Engineering Ltd, 01730 264672, www.cluson.co.uk

SAVING GRACES

GRACE USA's 8-piece Original Gun Care Screwdriver Set is a great addition to your tool box! Each screwdriver is hollow ground correctly, with tolerances held to -.002 .000, so you get an exact fit and less slot deformation. The square-shanked blades are hardened to R/C 52-56 and warranted under their Forever Guarantee not to twist or chip. The square-section handle is turned from Maine hardwood and protected by a stained finish. The set comes in a polythene wallet with a clear side. 100% made in the USA, this is a quality product that will suit all gunsmiths!

Price: £37.50

Contact: Henry Krank & Co Ltd, 0113 256 9163, www.henrykrank.com

A CUT ABOVE

Farid Mehr's K-2 PIN (C185TI) folder is big at 9.99" with a 4.54" CPM 10V blade - a high-vanadium tool steel using a powder metallurgy process, however, it's light at 6.2oz due to its Titanium handles. The blade is a Bowie-style with an upswept tip, with its full-flat grind it tapers over its entire width to a plain edge. It's slim at 0.138" though strong and rigid. There's Spyderco's trademark, thumb opening hole and the slab-sided handle offers a solid grip and the open-topped design stops the build-up of debris. Locking is by an integral liner cut into the right hand scale. With a lanyard hole at the back, the K-2 features a stainless clothing clip, as all good folders should!

Price: £294

Contact: Edgar Brothers Ltd, 01625 613177 www.spyderco.com

£294



£37.50

£49.95



Snug As a Bug!

Helikon's Patriot fleece jacket is a warm, comfortable and sturdy design. It features quality double superfine fleece, a high collar integrated with a hood and strong full-front zipper, which can be fastened to the neck, as well as re-enforced Cordura material on backs of the sleeves. It has two chest and two upper pockets on each sleeve and one lower pocket on the left sleeve, and a large pocket on the lower back. All are zip-closed! There are Velcro pads on the arms and underarm ventilation zippers. Adjustable Velcro wrist cuffs and drawstring waistband with cord lock finish off the detail. This is one impressive garment in a choice of colours: Coyote, Olive, Black, Foliage and Jungle!

Price: £49.95

Contact: Hennie Haynes, 0330 300 0400, www.heinnie.com



£61.20



£649

Plug 'n' Play!

PureTone's Custom Electronic Noise Suppressors (CENS) offers custom-moulded ear plugs in a choice of colours. Inside is a digital module in a choice of three models - the CENS ProFlex Digital, Competition and Hunter. These allow you to choose the level of protection required. The modules are small with hinged battery covers and use hearing aid cells, a magnetic-tipped brush (included) makes insertion/removal easier! Controls consist of a rotary volume and an ON/OFF switch, a button allows you to switch between two modes. 1 - all round ambient awareness, 2 - reduces noise interference. They come in a foam-lined aluminium case with a protective pouch, two ProFlex brushes for cleaning and 30 spare 312P batteries and wind shields.

Price: £649

Contact: Pure Tone Ltd,
01634 719 427, www.censdigital.com

New Wave

The MagnetoSpeed muzzle-mounted chronos are different! As opposed to breaking a beam of light, the bullet passes over magnets to do the same job. There are two versions - the Sporter and the V3. Both use exactly the same system but the latter is more sophisticated and user-friendly. There are two components; the bayonet sensor (Bayo), which attaches to the muzzle by a tensionable strap and is the base for the magnetic sensor bar, the second is the display unit that plugs into it to receive data. The Sporter is for plain barrels only and the V3 is for moderators. Simple and accurate with many functions, they're well worth a look!

Prices: Sporter £195/V3 £375

Contact: March Scopes UK, 01293 606901, www.marchscopes.co.uk

**FROM
£195**



£27.99

SECOND SKIN

MacWet gloves fit like a second skin and provide sensitivity and grip in all conditions. They're available in short or long cuff lengths, six colours (black, white, brown, green, blue and black/white) and 14 sizes. The wrist is closed by a Velcro strap and it's possible to operate touch screens! There are summer and winter versions, the latter are known as Climatic having a windproof, water-resistant, fleece-lined backing. MacWet offers a sizing chart and as a bonus they will go in the washing machine and do not distort or lose any of their properties!

Prices: £27.99 - Mesh-backed/£29.99 - Climatic backed

Contact: MacWet Ltd, 01902 701219 for nearest stockists
www.macwet.com

A VERY BRITISH AFFAIR!

Browning's Windsor parka is made of a nylon/polyester mix and rated water/windproof and breathable. The olive green body is counterpointed by brown trim strips on pocket edges etc. There are two massive, front, bellows pockets with a scooped opening and a large flap

(with hold open straps) secured by a press stud. On the side are fleece-lined and zipped hand warmer slots and inside are two more zipped pockets. Closure is by a full-length, double-ended zip and studded storm flap, no hood is fitted. Accompanying this is the

Windsor fleece vest that can be worn alone or zipped in to up its cold weather ability!

Prices: £239 & £75 accordingly

Contact: Browning UK,
01235 514550
www.browning.eu

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Graham Allen
shooting the
Daystate
Pulsar Bullpup
on the range -
he loved it!



What a Shame!

Graham Allen brings us his annual roundup of what was new in airguns at the show

Well, that was a bit disappointing! I've been going to the Midland Game Fair for the last 21 years and only missed one due to ill health; even the national petrol tanker driver's strike in 2000 didn't stop me driving 180 miles to get there.

This year's Airgun Expo was sadly a rather lack-lustre affair, with the least amount of airgun related stands at the show that I've ever seen. Only Daystate/Brocock, BSA/Gamo and Air Arms had dedicated stands and the actual area that

Airgun Expo covered was very small compared to previous years. I don't know the actual reason for the demise but it's probably a combination of factors; such as the cost of actually hiring a pitch, staffing and hotel costs etc, the state of the wider economy and the number of shows that are currently on offer around the country throughout the year. The level of theft from stalls must also have a detrimental effect for anyone with a stand.

BSA/GAMO

The show was still fairly busy however and I still managed to see plenty of new gear to write about, so, let's get on with it! The BSA stand had a really nice display highlighting the company's heritage and there were examples of several of the classic fullbore, rimfire and spring piston air rifles that made the Birmingham-based company its name. As far as modern airguns are concerned, there was an extremely nice looking limited edition Scorpion SE that is available exclusively from Ronnie Sunshine's shops. It features a Goldstar-style laminate stock with an adjustable cheekpiece and butt pad, a chromed trigger, trigger guard and muzzle



The Daystate Kaiser pellets are very well made

brake, a name plate that the purchaser can have engraved, two magazines, a silencer, gunbag and a 4-12 X 44 AO scope! All that for a bargain price of £799. I'm sure these package deals will sell very well indeed, as you certainly get a lot of bang for your buck.

GAMO

The BSA/Gamo collaboration that is the Coyote PCP is selling well and I'm sure the new synthetic stocked version will prove to be popular as well. The action has a rotary 10-shot magazine, a silencer bonded to the barrel and the ambidextrous butt has an



The training system allows the user to analyse their dry fire practice

adjustable cheekpiece; at only £399 it will be just the thing for those shooters who require a robust, accurate multishot air rifle.

DAYSTATE/BROCOCK

The new synthetic stocked Pulsar is as stunning as its predecessors and it's a real beauty that comes up to the shoulder like it grew there. The action features the standard 10-shot magazine and has a 300cc air reservoir, which enables the rifle to produce around 200 shots in .22 and 180 in .177. The 17" match grade barrel will produce excellent accuracy and the match trigger will ensure the pellet hits the target every time. The stock houses an in-built laser that can be turned on when the safety catch is turned to 'FIRE'. There's even an in-built spirit level on the stock behind the action to reduce canting! The sidelever can be swapped from right to left very easily, so lefties can adapt the rifle. FAC-rated rifles produce 35 ft/lb in .22 and 18 ft/lb in .177 calibre. This synthetic stocked Pulsar is £1,595 and the laminate is £1,995. Tony Belas gave me a couple of tins of the new Daystate Kaiser ammunition to try and they are select grade H&N pellets, weighing 14.66-grains in .22 and 8.64-grains in .177. They look to be well made and I am sure they will perform very well, look out for a review soon.

BROCOCK

The new Compatto (which is Italian for compact) is a semi-bullpup PCP, which means it's not quite as compact as a full on bullpup but very, well, compact, nonetheless. The synthetic stock has an upright thumbhole layout with a cut-out in the butt to reduce weight, an adjustable butt pad and a Picatinny rail under the short



The Tesro PA10-2 Compact pre-charged match pistol is €1,129

“The new synthetic stocked Pulsar is as stunning as its predecessors”

forend for mounting a laser, bipod or torch. The 10-shot rotary magazine is similar to that found on a Daystate PCP and is said to be more reliable than the older style feed system! The valving is of the 'slingshot' design, which improves efficiency and consistency and the shrouded Lothar Walther barrel has a 1/2" UNF thread for mounting an auxiliary silencer if required. There is a very handy power adjuster on the side of the action and power can be set for 6, 9 or 12 ft/lb, so is perfect for shooting in

and around farm buildings where full power isn't needed. The Compatto will be available in .177, .22 and .25 calibres and is going to be in the shops around November and at £585 it's a lot of rifle for the money.

DEBEN

Deben have always been into lamping and do not disappoint! The LedRay F600 Focusable Quad Colour Gunlight is fairly self explanatory and can be altered from white, red, blue or green by turning a dial on the



Some of the new scopes soon to be available from Optisan



Dave Mills wearing a made-to-measure Sauer jacket – breath in Dave!

▶ outside of the unit, a bit like the magnification of a telescopic sight is altered. There are three power levels plus a strobe and the unit is turned on via a push button or a remote switch. When the colour is changed, the beam position shifts slightly, so the designers have come up with a bespoke mount that can be quickly adjusted to re-position it to correspond with the target. Power comes from a rechargeable battery and there is an extension that can be screwed to the front of the torch to minimise overspill of light and concentrate the beam. The entire kit comes in a plastic carry case with all the accessories. Priced at £129.99, the F600 is competitively priced.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Sandwell Field Sports had a few new models from the Armex range of air rifles on their stand, called the 'Armex Black' range. The Rotex Black has a soft touch feel synthetic stock and is around £469.95. The Maxus Carbine Kit is a Terus spring piston rifle that has a carbine length barrel fitted and comes



BSA had a nice display of classic air rifles

complete with a 3-9 X 40 scope, mounts and a silencer, good value at £269.95

Optisan Optics (on the Daystate/Brocock stand) had some new offerings that will be available soon and the EVX Series have 30mm tubes, a new style of multi-aimpoint reticle, locking turrets and sidewheel parallax adjustment. There are the following scopes in the range- a 3-12 X 44, a first focal plain 4-16 power model, a 5-20 X 50 and a 6-24 X 56. Prices aren't confirmed yet but I'm sure they'll be competitive.

X-CALIBRE

Dave Mills was busy on the ATEO range but still found time to show me some of the new products he is importing. The Tesro range of pre-charged pneumatic target rifles and pistols from Germany have been selling well and Dave gave me a PA10-2 Compact pistol (price £1,129) to try and it's very well made



Tony Belas making sure the Daystate/Brocock stand was spick and span



The Gamo Coyote fitted with a synthetic stock and sound moderator

with an ergonomic wooden pistol grip and I can't wait to get it to the range. Dave also has the Tesro PCP rifles starting at 1,699 Euros and rimfire models from 2,600 Euros.

The new target shooting training system Dave will be importing can be fitted to any fullbore, rimfire or air rifle or pistol and allows the user to do dry fire practice, so saving ammunition and as no projectile is fired, it can be used at home or in a garage. The unit plugs into a laptop and gives a read out of the shot, before and after firing, so the user can analyse their technique. The sensor itself fits into the gun's muzzle using one of the supplied calibre-specific inserts; then, when the unit senses the action being dry fired, it displays the shot on the laptop's screen. It's a very clever item and at around £500 is keenly priced.

Dave and I struggled a bit but we eventually got him into his new, tailor-made Sauer shooting jacket. It's obviously made to be a snug fit, as it is designed to help support the body whilst competing. Sauer can make up a bespoke leather and canvas jacket/trouser combination in a wide range of colours for around £900 per outfit.



The Brocock Compatto semi-Bullpup has a new-style, 10-shot magazine system and a power adjuster



The Sound Moderators *at a Glance*

Schultz & Larsen were quick to realise the potential of sound moderators. Silencing the report of the rifle is good for the environment, increases the precision of the rifle and reduces the risk of hearing damage.

Unusually, for a rifle maker at least, Schultz & Larsen have chosen to design and manufacture their own moderators. In doing so they have set the same standards for performance demanded of their rifles.

Each moderator is made of the highest quality materials and designed to withstand repeated firing with heavy calibres. Every baffle has a stainless steel cone in the centre to ensure longevity – hence the designation for this model range – ‘Schultz & Larsen Hardcore’.

Venom

Lighter than both the Superdome and Thunderdome, the muzzle mounted Venom offers excellent sound reduction in a compact package. Featuring an efficient internal design and a tough scratch resistant external finish.

Length :	165mm (+153mm to Barrel)
Diameter :	50mm
Weight :	365 g
Thread sizes :	Metric: M14x1, M14x1.5, M15x1, M17x1, M18x1 Imperial: ½" x 20 UNF, ½" x 28 UNEF, 5/8" x 24
Available in :	6.5mm (.236" max). 7mm (.275" max). 8mm (.315mm max)



MC38 Ultradome / MC44 Superdome / MC54 Thunderdome

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Length (All Models) :	225mm (+120mm to Barrel)		
Diameter :	MC38: 38mm	MC44: 44mm	MC54: 54mm
Weight :	MC38: 322 g	MC44: 385 g	MC54: 523 g
Thread sizes (MC38) :	Metric: M14x1, M14x1.5, M15x1 Imperial: ½" x 20 UNF, ½" x 28 UNEF		
Thread sizes (MC44) :	Metric: M14x1, M14x1.5, M15x1, M17x1 Imperial: ½" x 20 UNF, ½" x 28 UNEF, 5/8" x 24		
Thread sizes (MC54) :	Metric: M14x1, M14x1.5, M15x1, M17x1, M18x1 Imperial: ½" x 20 UNF, ½" x 28 UNEF, 5/8" x 24		
Available in (All Models) :	6mm (.236" max). 7mm (.275" max). 8mm (.315mm max)		



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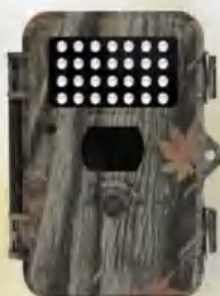
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WOULDN'T IT BE GOOD IF?

I think all shooting products in general are very much a case of: 'wouldn't it be good if they just did that'? A factor most relevant to night vision (NV) equipment! When NV came, we started off with basic generation (Gen 1) units and slowly the market grew and Gen 1 gave way to Gen 1+, then Gen 2 etc. Truth is, the more money you threw at it the better it got! That's why I never bothered, as I don't do that much night shooting and could not justify the prices. Plus I still found some kit less than ideal in terms of optical performance.

DIGITAL REVOLUTION

Then digital NV started to appear, which offered workable ability and more acceptable prices. Pulsar's Digsight N550 and the improved versions are great examples; with one-shot zero function, multiple reticule choice, integral IR projector, digital zoom and the list goes on. I tested the original 550 and was most impressed but would have liked a bit more magnification; see there it is already – 'wouldn't it be good if'? Plus digital NV allows daytime usage, or at least easier zeroing.

The next barriers were size and couldn't they be more like a telescopic sight in terms of features and rifle mounting? Yukon had the answer, with their hybrid Photon design that mated the back end of a seemingly conventional telescopic sight with a digital objective housing. First models even retained the mechanical, external turrets but that soon gave way to everything going electric.

MORE MAG AND VIEW

The latest version is their Photon XT 6.5x50, which is around the same size as a comparable 3-12x50 day scope. The body

Yukon MPR allows you to video and review what you are looking at

The Photon uses 2 x AA batteries and gives a very good run time

Nightmaster NM 800 IC pumps out a lot of power, note the fully adjustable QD mount

Pete Moore looks at the latest hybrid night vision scope from Yukon and is a bit impressed!



Detail of the digi section – note the IR module, menu button/wheel, the video out port (lower left) and the large forward focus ring

tube is 30mm and offers an uninterrupted 6" mounting surface for the one-piece mount (supplied), with a focusing ring behind; up front is the digital housing. The layout is

simple – objective lens with flip-up cap (with day time pin hole) and focusing ring, as all NV optics have to be focused front and rear as the range changes.

Though offering similar features to the Pulsar Digisights, the Photon keeps things simpler, with fewer options, which is no bad thing! On top is the battery housing that takes 2 x AA cells, top left is the IR projector with the ON/OFF button behind, this also controls the IR level. On the left is a wheel with a button in the centre, which is your selector/navigation system. Below and forward of this is the video out socket.

There's no removable memory card or an external power socket, which keeps the price down, however Yukon also offers an MPR (mobile player recorder) which TAC-Light UK supplied, along with a Nightmaster NM800 IC IR torch and adjustable mount.

TWILIGHT & BEYOND

The Photon is not a true day scope but can be used as such, helped by the pin hole lens cap that reduces light input, that would otherwise white out the view on bright days and is easily zeroed in day time too. Where it really shines is in the transitional period between twilight and full dark, giving an edge that few, if any, day scopes can fill. The x6.5 magnification is heading in the right direction too, giving just that bit more but still with a good field of view of 7.5° @ 100 yards.

Operation is simple – 2 x AA batteries go in the top, the IR is located top left and the push button at the rear doubles as the ON/OFF switch (green indicator light) and IR selector with three levels of illumination intensity and IR off. One short push turns it ON and a longer one (3-seconds) turns it off; individual presses turn on and adjust the IR. On the right is a short, plastic Picatinny rail for add-on torches etc, which is a bit flimsy. What you see in the square screen is the reticule and a battery life indicator (lower right), the view is in black and white only, which is fine.

NAVIGATION

Navigating and selecting menus is easy! The selector is located on the left of the NV housing and consists of a central button with a wheel around it. Press the button to go in and you get three icons to the left of the reticule; top - reticule choice, middle – reticule colour and bottom - zeroing.

Press it in to enter and then use the roller to select an option, then click to engage it. The reticule choice offers – Mil-

MPR plugged in, it works well but the spaghetti is a bit annoying!



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

■ Name	Yukon Photon XT 6.5x50 Digital
■ Reticules -	6 options
■ Colours -	3 options
■ Power	2 x AA batteries
■ Length	17" inc eye cup
■ Body tube	30mm round
■ Integral IR	Yes
■ Video out	Yes
■ Price	£419.95
	Yukon MPR £179.95
	Nightmaster NM800 IC £149.95
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strikes, which is not a big issue. With the 22 subs I set zero at 25, which shoots near point of aim at 50 and drops 7" at 100. The Mil-Dot reticule is cock-on, as I converted my ballistics to Milradian and was hitting targets from 50 to 150 yards using Mil hold over. The 17HMR and 223 were even easier, due to their flatter trajectories!

The MPR worked well and I managed to get some good footage of a muntjac moving through game cover and also a rabbit daft enough to poke his nose out and sit side on at 75 yards, which was shot as it was being shot. For testing, I placed a series of reactive targets out to 150 yards in 50 yard increments, it was a clear but overcast night, so good NV conditions. By far the best view is in the twilight, as the image does degrade a bit in the dark, even with IR, but is still recognisable to accurately hit. The on-board IR is not bad and good out to 100 yards but loses power after that. Saying that, I was able to pick up eyes at 200 yards, but target ID was not good at that longer distance. The Nightmaster NM800 torch had a rheostat and was in an adjustable mount and really lit things up; aided by the fact you can adjust beam angle/intensity to suit. From my testing, I'd say the Photon is of more use to airgunners and rimfire hunters, in the latter case out to 100 yards. I'd push it to 150 ish for foxes with the NM800 on a centrefire!

► Dot-style, two fine crosses with range bars on the 6 o'clock arm, an open T-cross, a Dual-X and what looks like a No 4 ret. Of these, I found Mil-Dot the most useful, but that's just me. Once you have what you want, press again to select. Moving down to the middle, repeat the process and here you get the choice of red, white and green. I found red worked best for me, but in the half-light white proved useful too!

Finally zeroing, which is of the one-shot type, with you selecting the individual vertical/horizontal planes to adjust. This requires that you see the bullet hole and the rifle is solidly rested. Maintain your aim point and select horizontal, then using the roller, move the cross hair to coincide with the bullet hole. Then switch to vertical and repeat until the cross is over the hole, then select the correction and come out. In this mode you get a small Mil-Dot in green, no matter what reticule you have selected. Brightness is also adjustable, which is useful, as on a bright day lighter objects will literally white out, even at close ranges.

SMILE WHEN YOU SEE THE FLASH!

The Photon is capable on all rifle types and sturdy enough to withstand fullbore recoil. What I really liked was the ease of mounting, as the 30mm body means standard rings. I

fitted it to a 223 AR15 and a Smith & Wesson 15/22, both offering flat topped receivers, a CZ452 in 11mm dovetail and a Ruger 17HMR (M77/17) and 22 Rimfire (M77/22) in their dedicated rings. Though the objective area looks bulky, as can be seen even on the Ruger, with medium height mounts there's plenty of barrel clearance. I did find in all cases the scope does not come back enough in standard, vertical mounts; for example, on the Ruger and CZ I had to push my head forward a bit to get a good position.

Zeroing showed that at anything much over 25 yards you cannot see the bullet



Detail of the 30mm body tube and eyepiece

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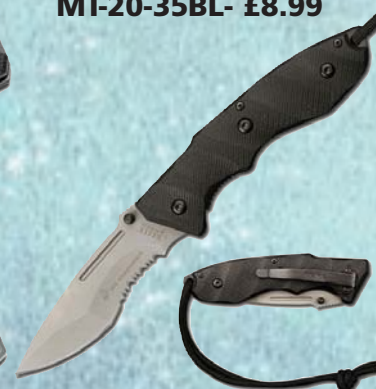
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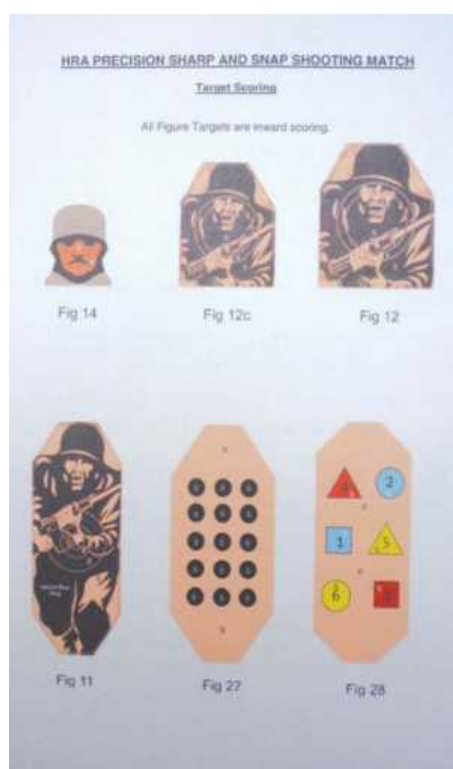
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Graham Allen reports back from Bisley after taking part in a charity competition in aid of The Royal British Legion.

Charity

BEGINS AT HOME

Competitors engaging targets, Graham Allen is on the right



The targets used during the day, the 1½" high Hun's Head is not shown

The Royal British Legion (RBL) do a fantastic job supporting former servicemen and women, they also help serving military personnel as well. Typically they rely completely on donations and the annual Poppy Appeal is their most high profile fund-raising event. As a charity, they don't make a song and dance about what they do and they try to keep costs to a minimum, thus using the maximum amount of money raised to carry out their vital work. The UK public obviously hold the RBL in high regard, as millions of pounds are raised every year. The British shooting community has a lot of ex-service personnel amongst its ranks and many other shooters have an interest in military firearms and history.

GRAHAM'S IN

John Morgan-Hosey, a keen Highpower and Civilian Service Rifle competitor is a Royal Naval Officer and had seen first hand how the RBL looked after former servicemen and he supports them whenever he can. In 2011 he decided to organise a precision shooting competition at Bisley to raise funds. The competitions have usually taken place in the

summer and have clashed with my family holidays but this year the match was held on the 5th of September, so I was able to take part.

Everyone received a goodie bag when they booked in, which contained some RBL merchandise, a baseball cap, morale patch and a very neat bottle opener made from an inert .50 cal round.

The course of fire was very challenging, with some targetry not seen in the Civilian Service Rifle matches I take part in. The first stage involved the Figure 14s (or 'Hun's Head', which is usually a life-size representation of, you guessed it, a Hun's Head and are usually engaged at 100 yards. For this comp however they were 1½" high, that might sound bad enough but they were engaged from 300 yards! It was a real challenge, even with a 16-power scope and I hit the grand total of ONE, oh well, better luck next year! One shooter actually managed to hit 8 out of 10, which was remarkable!

SPRAY & PRAY

Other stages involved shooting seated at 400 yards but we were allowed to use

improvised rests. I used a modified camera tripod but there were extra long-legged Harris bipods, backpacks and crossed sticks being used along the line. Seeing as Gavin Haywood of Anglo Custom Rifles wasn't allowed to use the Black & Decker Workmate he used last year, (I kid you not!) he used a professional-looking video camera tripod instead. He also turned up with two 30-round mags for his AR 15 straight-pull and then proceeded to pepper the target with 60 rounds in 2 minutes. It paid off though, as he scored a hit on each of the 10 targets! As you can see, tactics can play a big part as straight shooting in the match and it was certainly fun to watch.

Some stages involved sitting, kneeling and prone at 300 yards, with some of the prone shots being taken from the weak shoulder. Another stage, shot prone at 500 yards, had a choice of Fig 12s, Fig 12Cs or Fig 14s. My two sighters were bang on for elevation, with just a tad of windage. I decided to go for the Fig 14, only to forget to aim off for the wind! That schoolboy error cost me dearly points-wise; a tidy group in the sand to the right of the target won't get you many points!

I did well on some stages and obviously not so well on others but I'd had a cracking day on the range, helping to raise money for a fantastic charity in the process. I came 47th out of 94, so I came exactly half way up the scoreboard (or halfway down) and I was pretty pleased all things considered. There was some amazing shooting during the day and a mention must be made of Brian Reacher, who used an LMT straightpull AR10 style rifle and factory GGG ammo; it just goes to show what can be done when the right guy's behind the right rifle!

RBL ON RANGE

The awards were handed out by a representative of The Royal British Legion



John Morgan-Hosey presenting Andy Brook with the custom rifle donated by Devon Custom Rifle

THE RESULTS

■ Short Range

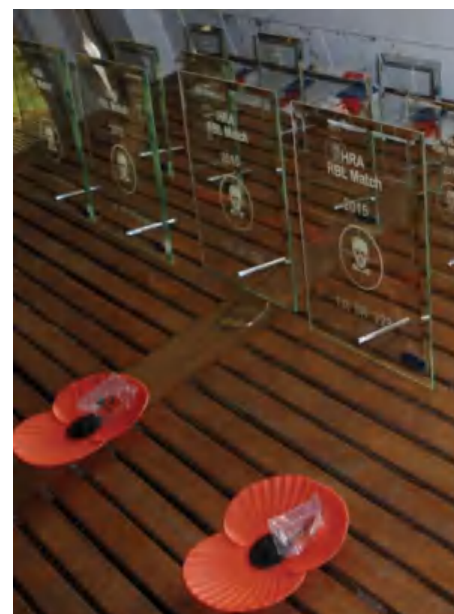
.308 Class:	Brian Reacher	225.
.223 Class:	Dave Moran	212.
Wildcat Class:	Paul Tasker	209.

■ Long Range

.308 Class:	Brian Reacher	245.
.223 Class:	Gavin Haywood	216.
Wildcat Class:	Dave Holt	237.

and she was amazed at how much money had been raised: it was a massive £10,000! The match was extremely well supported by the UK gun trade and there were raffle prizes totalling £7,000 up for grabs. Devon Custom Rifles had donated a rather beautiful rifle in .243 calibre, Bradley Arms a .22 rimfire AR15, Low Mill Ranges a GSG 522 and Valkyrie Rifles a customised Mossberg pump action shotgun.

These, as well as a myriad other prizes were selected at random and then a competitor's entry number picked out of a hat. Everyone won something, even if some people 'only' went home with some cleaning patches and solvent. No matter what people got, there were smiling faces all round. One very happy chap was Andy Brook who won that rifle from Devon Custom Rifles. I won a very nice pair of Vortex binoculars but I'd have been happy with anything to be honest.



Some of the elegant trophies awarded to the class winners

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT'S DUE

John Morgan-Hosey, his wife Julie and all the others who made the competition run so smoothly deserve a massive pat on the back. Their combined efforts made for a very enjoyable day on the range, raising a small fortune for an amazing charity in the process. The gun trade supported the event with their raffle prize donations but let's also not forget those riflemen and women who paid the entrance fee, turned up on the day and persuaded friends and family to sponsor them via the Just Giving page. The page is still up and running and if anyone reading this would like to add to the total, visit www.justgiving.com/hra-rbl-match. At the time of writing, the total was over £13,000!

Next year's event, on the 3rd of September, is hopefully going to be open to even more competitors, with the aim of raising £20,000.



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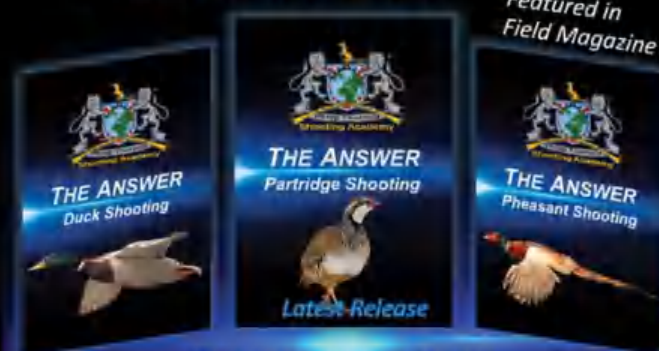
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Blued Varmint pictured

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Price: £125 and £25 respectively (including P+P) £140 When purchased together.

Contact: Best Fittings 0845 456 1185, www.best-fittings.co.uk

FROM
£125

Slip On And Shoot

Rowan Engineering has a new silencer adaptor for the Air Arms HFT 500 and Ultimate Sporter models. It's secured with via 4 x M3 grub screws and locates at the muzzle by a machine stop shoulder. Now any 1/2" UNF silencer can be fitted according to choice. The design is sleek and features a flat bottom, to give clearance between the barrel and the gun's air cylinder, and can be supplied in either polished or black anodized aluminium.

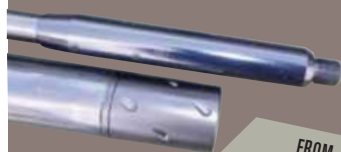
Prices:

Polished Aluminium: £33.95

Black Anodized: £34.95

Contact: Rowan Engineering, 01295 251188

www.rowanengineering.com



FROM
£33.95

WHAT A DRAG!

Allen's Pro-Series Tactical Case/Bag measures 48 x 14" x 3" deep, it's manufactured from 1200D Black Cordura, with dense foam padding for protection. It will accommodate most silenced rifles up to 46" in length with scope and bipods. Along one side are four external pockets and an integral drag handle is positioned up front. On the opposite side is an adjustable backpack harness, with sternum strap. It positions the bag high as to not hinder when walking. There are also large central carry handles and a detachable/adjustable single shoulder strap with rubber pad. Inside is a butt retainer and twin retention straps.

Price: £162.99

Contact: Highland Outdoors, 0845 099 0252, www.highlandoutdoors.co.uk



£162.99

Premium Selection

JSB has built a reputation with competition shooters with their superior pellets. Consistent weight and machining tolerances ensure top performance! However, minor inconsistencies can occur with damage and in transit, occasionally creeping into the equation, so JSB has seen fit to introduce a premium line. Their new Exact Premiums come smartly packaged, with each of the 200, hand-selected pellets, sorted for weight (+ or -.001-grain) then individually inserted into protective foam. Top-level sport is all about confidence and these certainly inspire that!

Name: JSB Exact Premium pellets

Price: £12 for a box of 200

Contact: Intershoot, 028 8225 0591, www.intershoot.co.uk



£12

Quiet Please!

Deben's Whisper 130 and 180 moderators are suitable for .177 and .22 calibres. Aluminium, they incorporate a fluted rubber sleeve and come with a choice of four muzzle adaptors, allowing you to swap from rifle to rifle! These include 1/2" UNF male and female threads, an Air Arms slide-on 11mm adaptor and a slide-on for 16mm bull barrels. They measure 150mm and 200mm accordingly and are 34mm in diameter Inc sleeve and weigh 114 and 147-grams respectively. Moderation uses conical baffles, held in place with the removable end cap, the 130 has two and the 180 three and proved effective!

Prices: £39.95 & £47.95

Contact: Deben Group Industries Ltd: 01394 387762, www.deben.com



FROM
£39.95



HFT-specific

Based on their FTP900, the Air Arms HFT500 is aimed at HFT. A fully adjustable stock, floating barrel, and side-lever cocking action add to shootability. There's an accessory rail under the forend and a full-length air cylinder (100-shots). The barrel has an air stripper and also gets a trigger upgrade; with a fully adjustable blade, and re-jigged mechanism, it can be reversed, to be shot as a button, or flat-faced and moves back and forward. In .177 only, this single-shot, regulated rifle weighs 7.6 lbs with its 19" barrel.

Price: £925 Inc charging adaptor

Contact: Air Arms, 01323 845853, www.air-arms.co.uk

£925

SLIP ON

The standard ½" UNF HE (High Efficiency) Weihrauch Silencer is an efficient moderator! However, under-levers like the HW77 cannot benefit, as it can't be threaded, due to the front sight block assembly. Weihrauch has now developed a slip-on version to suit! The rear is milled out so that it slides onto the muzzle, while leaving the under-lever and locking system free to operate. It's retained by a bar screwed into the rear of the unit. It's 9 ¼" long and adds 7 3/8" to the overall length of the rifle and is a practical solution!



£60

Price: SRP £60

Contact: Hull Cartridge Co, 01482 342571
www.hullcartridge.co.uk



£899

Best Bullpup?

The Wildcat is FX's latest Bullpup and offers a fully moderated, smooth twist barrel, thumbhole synthetic stock, 8-shot magazine and a sweet 2-stage trigger. The cocking handle is in the middle and offers slick operation, with the safety rear/right of the action. A long intermount is fitted, that offers a dual 11mm/1" Weaver rail. Available in .177, 22 and 25 (12 ft/lb or FAC-rated) the action is fully regulated and offers an excellent shot count. Fill pressure is 230 BAR, there's a manometer at the front of the cylinder, which uses a push-in prod and rotary filler cover.

Price: £899

Contact: Anglo Spanish Imports, 01728 688555
www.a-s-i.co.uk



£899

BSA Goldstar SE (multi-shot)

The Goldstar SE offers a fully adjustable rifle, that is both competitive yet equally at home controlling pests. It offers a regulated action, adjustable air-stripper, adjustable 2-stage trigger, fully floating barrel and a 10-shot magazine! A single shot version is also available and three stock choices: oil-finished walnut, and two laminates, red, white & blue, or black pepper! All offer full adjustment on butt pad, length of pull and comb height/position. The floating barrel is cold, hammer-forged. In use, it shows some excellent down-range groups (sub-1/2 at 45yds) and superb consistency of 12fps over 100 shots, phenomenal given the compact cylinder!

Price: £899 (single shot or multi)

Contact: BSA Guns www.bsaguns.co.uk

Beat The Snap!

Sportsmatch's new DM80 Dampa mount is specifically designed to fit Weaver-type rails. Attachment is by three cross bolts, with screw slots and knurled heads. It's a two-part design, with the top section (rings) sitting on small rubber bushes, which allows the harsh and quick, 2-way recoil, unique to spring/gas ram guns to be absorbed. This means that the scope is protected from vibration/shock damage, plus with the ever-increasing use of these 1" bases, it offers a purpose-built scope mount to suit many applications.

Price: £52.95

Contact: Sportsmatch UK,
01525 381638
www.sportsmatch-uk.com



£52.95

Control Freak

The ACZ Ultra FT Stock is made for Air Arms S400 and offers a fully adjustable, drop-in Field Target stock system. The chassis is Duralumin AW7070 and black hard anodized. Cheek piece, pistol grip and palm rest are available in black lacquer, beech, or laminate. Fitting is simple! A single hex bolt (supplied) holds the stock to the action. The action is only held along the length of the receiver, allowing the cylinder to flex and expand as necessary. There are a number of options.

Prices: FT (R or L handed) £360 BR

(Bench Rest) (R or L handed) £330

Optional Weight Set (bar & 4 weights) £20

Contact: Sure Shot Airguns Ltd,
0844 8003550
www.sureshot-airguns.co.uk



FROM
£330



FROM
£165

Canned Air!

Midland Diving Equipment (MDE) offers high quality air cylinders for filling PCPs, made to their design in Europe to British and International safety standards. MDE fit their own valving system, integrated dry gauge, and the option of 1/8 or 1/4 BSP hoses. The end user just screws on their filling adapter and the bottle is ready. Their new Jubilee 300bar cylinder valve is designed to restrict air flow, so the gun fills slowly, which will reduce heat build-up, meaning more accurate fill pressures! MDE offers four sizes – 3, 4 and 7 litres, 12 is available too.

Prices (with gauge):

3Ltr £165

4Ltr £185

7Ltr £198

Contact: Midland Diving
Equipment, 0116 2124262
www.midlanddiving.com

Who's the Boss? FX's latest FAC-rated PCP throws a 46.3-grain 308" slug at 850 fps/75 ft/lbs, which is pretty impressive!



Moderator removed, this simple if large design really does the business!



The side-lever action is slick and smooth and runs a 9-shot magazine, you can just see the safety catch below the linkage

I have to admit to taking a deal more interest in air rifles recently; even going as far as deciding on a Bullpup, multi-shot PCP in a 12 ft/lb version, as I reckon it will add a new dimension to my shooting! And a recent article by Mark Camoccio on the new FX Wildcat got me thinking. Speaking to Edward King (MD) of A.S.I. (FX importers) got the promise of the loan of a Wildcat when one becomes available; apparently they are selling like hot cakes. He also asked if I would like to test the Boss, which is a seriously, FAC-rated, .30 calibre gun. I was intrigued, as we are talking energy levels getting near 22 Rimfire.

THE WOW FACTOR

The Boss arrived and it was hard not to be impressed! It's a big bugger at 47" with a 23" barrel complete with integral, reflex moderator that covers half of it, and a one-piece thumbhole (TH) stock. It's not that heavy, tipping the scale at 7 lbs (synthetic stock) and 7.5 lbs in laminate or walnut furniture. I had the former, which is a flat

grey and gives a sort of soft grip feel, which is most practical! It's not the prettiest of rifles and without doubt the wooden versions look better!

The TH layout is well designed, giving a lot of head support, with a grip big enough for a decent hold, along with a generous thumb cut-out. The butt pad is adjustable, so you can tailor your position. The pistol grip is grooved, as are the sides of the abbreviated forend, which is done to allow the fitting of the large 500 CC, fixed air cylinder, which as we shall see is needed.

The filling point is under the forend, with a small manometer to the rear. The system uses a QD connector, which the rifle comes with and as others have commented on FX guns in the past, there's no cover! The action is a side-lever mechanism with a 90° downwards handle on the right, and it feeds from a 9-shot drum magazine, which initially is a bit quirky to fill. It's inserted and removed from the right side and retained by the pellet prod when the action is closed. Rear right of the action is a 2-position rolling

THE BIG ONE

Pete Moore tests one serious piece of FAC-rated hardware from FX of Sweden

safety lever, well positioned for the firing hand thumb – forward to FIRE and rearwards for SAFE.

GENEROUS RAIL

The long, aluminium action block shows an integral 11mm dovetail, so no problems with scope mounting. The drum magazine stands a bit tall and you will need medium/high mounts to suit, for the test I fitted a Leupold, 3.5-10x50 VX- 3L in Sportmatch 30mm mounts, which proved ideal.

The barrel is a match-grade, smooth twist type, which gives a smooth bore, with just the last few inches rifled and certainly proved accurate! With the moderator/shroud removed you can see that it's about 4" longer than the barrel. This offers a forward



The Boss runs at 250 BAR and gives 40+ very consistent shots, it uses around 25 BAR per magazine



Like airgun pellets only bigger; these traditional looking .308" dome heads weigh impressive 46.3-grains

"The barrel is a match-grade, smooth twist type, which gives a smooth bore, with just the last few inches rifled and certainly proved accurate!"

of the muzzle chamber and a long rear expansion-type tube, I was unsure as to its effectiveness, but it worked well! What did impress was the fully adjustable match trigger. The blade is a vertical post, with a curved finger pad section, which can be rotated and slid up and down to suit. Equally, it's possible to move the post back and forward too and the break took some getting used to, as it's LIGHT at around 7oz!

WELL REGULATED

The calibre is .30", which is not small, and uses a .308", 46.3-grain standard dome headed/waisted slug with a ballistic



The thumbhole stock is a good one and offers an adjustable butt pad, the trigger is fully adjustable for just about all needs

coefficient of 0.115; almost like someone made it for a joke. However, performance was no joke, as this is one accurate and powerful gun with some serious reach!

The action is regulated and FX claims a shot count of 40+ full power shots. The fill is 250 BAR and as I discovered, one magazine's worth of nine pellets uses up 25 BAR. I initially kept topping it up, thinking I'd soon lose power and it was a bit of a struggle for my 300 BAR, 4-litre tank I got second hand off Henry Kranks. It came with a very short whip lead, which proved awkward to use, so a call to Best Fittings got me a 1000mm hose with QD coupler and a quick coupler set, so I could set it up for other guns. I also treated myself to one of their carry handles and bottle cradles; two useful items no doubt!

I decided to bite the bullet and filled to 250 BAR and proceeded to shoot full magazines over the chrono, noting speeds and pressures. Well I got five mags worth out of the Boss, that's 45-shots running an average of 853 fps, which gives an impressive 75 ft/lbs. The extreme spread (ES) was a pleasing 10 fps, overall more than enough for any hunting trip and then some!

RANGING IN

I found a YouTube clip showing the Boss being used to shoot prairie dogs out to 150 yards and it also talked about killing coyotes too. This is what really intrigues me about FAC-rated air rifles – their ability to do what

↑ FOR

Powerful and accurate performer

↓ AGAINST

An air tank cover would be good
Filler point needs cap

→ VERDICT

A specialised rifle but a real power house
Bit long
Good shot count given the calibre and power output
Eminently shootable



The big, 500cc bottle takes up a lot of space and tends to be what you hold on to, some sort of cover would be good

The Boss is a big rifle at 47" long, though at 7lbs reasonably handy and is a real thumper!

► 22 rimfires can; I reckon if you can kill a fox with a 22 sub-sonic out to 100 yards with a well placed shot, that .30" cal pellet could probably do the same! OK a 40-grain, sub-sonic is averaging 1050 fps/99 ft/lbs at the muzzle and the Boss has less speed and energy but a much bigger pellet, and it kills rabbits effectively; maybe more so than a 22 sub!

OK, enough of supposition, let's get back to the nuts & bolts! Filling the magazine is a bit odd when compared to others. Remove the magazine and reverse it so the front plate is facing you. Then rotate the plastic cover plate anti clockwise and hold it there so that the aperture is exposed, then drop a pellet in base-first. Now turn the mag around and rotate the cover plate to expose the chambers and drop the slugs in – nose-first. Open the action to retract the pellet prod and slide the mag in, then close it to chamber the first round.

SMOOTH OPERATOR

The side lever mechanism is slick and certain, as is the magazine indexing; however, as I discovered it's possible to double load by mistake. I set zero at 55 yards and was pleased and impressed to see the Boss was putting pellet on pellet. This gave me an inch drop deviation out to 60 yards using 5 yard increments. After that it went like this: 65/-1.37", 70/-2.27",

75/-3.31", 80/-4.48", 85/-5.81", 90/-7.27", 95/-8.89", 100/-10.65". At a maximum range of 150 yards the drop is -36.90" and the energy 52 ft/lbs. Obviously playing with your set zero will allow you to determine the most useful distance. I initially set my maximum range at 100 yards, which seemed sensible to me.

Sadly I had used up all my ammo on testing and a call to A.S.I. got me another tin. However, I did not have long to shoot them, as the Boss had to be back for the Tackle & Gun show, so the fieldwork was a bit short. But I had success the first night out; I was staked out 50 yards from some game cover and I spotted a rabbit at 70 yards on the adjacent track, which was swiftly joined by another. The drop was 2.27" and I placed the cross hair just over its shoulder and squeezed that super smooth trigger.

THE MEAT SLAP!

There was a sort of 'SPROING' noise and with a loud meat slap when it hit #1 spun over, gave a twitch and lay still. His mate just looked at him, I reckon the slow moving pellet and the Boss's moderator gave little signature at that distance. Well beggars can't be choosers and I swung onto #2 with identical results. I got a third about 20 minutes later at 55 yards just as the light was fading so overall most impressed. All were textbook, behind the shoulder shots

and the authority of that heavy, 46-grain pellet was self-evident!

After that first outing I would be confident out to 100 yards and if I can get the rifle back will push it out to 150 to see what occurs; though wind would be the killer. Out of interest, I tried a shot with the moddy off; which was loud! Yes that big can makes the Boss a tad unwieldy in some situations but it does a job 100%. No real complaints, though I'd get a bottle cover as your hand grips the metal and not the forend. This test has got me thinking that maybe I should go for an FAC-rated Wildcat, not the power or calibre of the Boss but say a 22 doing around 25/30 ft/lbs; decisions, decisions!

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

■ Name	FX Boss
■ Calibre	.308" (46.3-grain FX pellet)
■ Type	multi-shot PCP
■ Capacity	9 (DM)
■ Action	Side action
■ Barrel	23"/integral moderator
■ Length	47"
■ Weight	7lbs (synthetic on test)
■ Fill pressure 2	50 BAR
■ Shots per charge	40+
■ Price	£1300
■ Contact	A.S.I Ltd, 01728 688555 www.a-s-i.co.uk www.fxairguns.com
■ Contacts	Henry Krank & Co, 0113 256 9163 Best Fittings, 0845 456 1185 UK 0044 (0) 1747 312672 Intl Sportsmatch, 01525 381638

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Should we clamp down on shooters calling targets; I think so?

HFT
DIARY

Mark Camoccio

considers shooters calling targets, and looks at some comps

PENALTY CLAUSE!

There's been a plethora of top Hunter Field Target events of late, so here's a quick round-up of the biggest and best around the country. Once we've covered those, it's time we broached the thorny topic of querying targets- something I've been meaning to discuss for a while. It's an interesting area, and one which needs a shakeup in my book; so let's get started, as there's plenty to mull over!

AIR ARMS RSN10 MEMORIAL OPEN CUP CHALLENGE 2015

No less than 156 competitors gathered at Northall Farm in beautiful Sussex, for this year's event, and with the now well established format of this shoot a regular feature in the HFT calendar, this is one day for the real enthusiast. Competitors tackled a 25-target course through the wood in the morning, stopped for lunch (all included in the entrance fee), and then went back out for another 25 in the afternoon- for an aggregate score ex100. A sociable atmosphere is always a big draw, with the chance to compare notes and experiences over lunch and then try and put things right in the afternoon session; it creates something of a unique atmosphere.

Weather on the day was balmy hot, with great facilities to call upon and two excellent target layouts to play with, an exciting day's action unfolded.

With many of the sport's top names in attendance, competition was fierce too, with a four-way shoot-off a fitting way to decide the winner. Andy Simpson held his nerve to take this year's honours but with generous sponsorship from Air Arms, in the form of an HFT500, Sam Robinson was

Sam Robinson, alongside Air Arms MD, Claire West, won the HFT500 in the raffle at the AA shoot



another happy camper, leaving with the prize rifle from the raffle

Held in memory of Bob Nicholls, the original driving force behind the formation of Air Arms, (and the father of current MD, Claire West), this event has become a real classic; fondly regarded and anticipated in equal measure. So thanks to Claire and all who made this year's shoot such a success.

RESULTS

■ Open Class:	1ST	Andy Simpson	93ex100
	2ND	Gary Chillingworth	93
	3RD	Dave Ramshead	93
	4TH	Alex Honeywell	93
■ Recoiling:	1ST	Keith Warburton	78
■ .22 Class:	1ST	Edward Tandi	77
■ Ladies Class:	1ST	Theresa Reed	81
■ Juniors 14-16:	1ST	Daniel Attfield	82

■ Top Manufacturer: Air Arms

UKAHT NATIONAL ROUND 8- SHEPRETH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, SPONSORED BY IMPACT AIRGUNS

Weather plays a big part for me, in the enjoyment of HFT and by that I basically mean that I hate shooting in rain. Thankfully, come round 8 of the UKAHT series, we were treated to an absurdly warm day and whilst the early mist hung in the fields to confuse our range finding, this early visitor soon burnt off, to leave near perfect conditions for our sport.

Cambridge HFT always stages a good event, with a wooded section and then a series of targets scattered outside in the open field. This time round though, their over keen landlord had ploughed away much of the surrounding grassy areas, so with much of the action taking place over bare mud, dry conditions were a Godsend!

Having spent several hours experimenting with different scopes on my FTP just the day before and unsettling everything, I hit a point where I couldn't

face any more setting-up! So come this event, I just grabbed my old faithful Air Arms S400/Zeiss combo and hoped for the best.

A little more application and patience led me to a useful 56 ex60 at this one, and just one point off the leaders! Yet with seven shooters on 57, I was left to rue my missed stander in the last few targets! A confidence booster nonetheless, and hopefully a timely return to form for the final double header (HFT Masters/UKAHT) at Emley Moor.

RESULTS

■ Open Class:	1st	Simon Vant	57
	2nd	Vince Holland	57
	3rd	Alex Honeywell	57
	4th	Vince Blackman	57
	5th	Simon Howarth	57
■ Junior 9-13:	1st	Mitchell Birch	39
■ Junior 14-16:	1st	Tom Willingham	55
■ Ladies:	1st	Theresa reed	51



Ray Hampton won the HFT Masters round at Horsham

HFT MASTERS- HORSHAM, EAST SUSSEX

New to the 2015 season has been the HFT Masters, and having spoken to the organizers, they have been extremely well received, with the result that next year will probably see the introduction of a series format, with an overall title to aim at, as well as each individual round.

This round, again held in the beautiful county of Sussex, had the added drama of a torrential downpour happening right up to the starting blocks, then giving way to reasonable conditions when it mattered. Numbers were held back slightly due to this event falling just one week after the major Air Arms Memorial shoot and I for one, for that reason, couldn't schedule another long trek across country.

By all accounts though, this was another excellent shoot, organized by Ian Bainbridge and Roger Lait, with their vibrant format showing once again, what an enjoyable day's sport is all about. A host of companies back these events, and with BSA the main sponsor, there's plenty to get excited about for the future.

RESULTS

■ Tier 1 Open Class:	1ST	Ray Hampton	56ex60
	2ND	Steve Willingham	54
	3RD	Steve Edmondson	54
■ Tier 1 Junior Class:	1ST	Tom Willingham	54
■ Tier 1 Springer:	1ST	Paul Burt	48
■ Tier 2 Open Class:	1ST	John Cooper	52
■ Tier 2 Springer:	1ST	Roy Pearce	47
■ Tier 2 Junior:	1ST	Lois Perry	40



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MARSHALL!

My final note this month concerns the calling of targets in HFT. Attend any big competition around the country and you'll more than likely hear a whistle blown a few times (sometimes many times), to indicate that a shooter wants a target checking. At the moment, a competitor is allowed to ask a marshal to go and check a particular target, because they think they have hit the kill area, but the target has failed to fall down. At certain events, the number of calls can be frustrating, ruining the rhythm of the shooter and tarnishing the sport's image. This unrestricted approach can just be an invitation to some, to query a variety of shots, largely free from come-back. A 'split', where a pellet hits the edge of a kill zone, often results in part of the pellet then being deflected towards the middle of the paddle. Allowing shooters just to claim they hit the target is a recipe for disaster. The names of shooters who query targets are sometimes recorded at UKAHT events but I'm not convinced it works as much of a deterrent.

Go to any top Field Target event, and the contrast is obvious. A whistle and target call is EXTREMELY RARE, and with top quality, super reliable Nockover targets widely used and adopted as almost the standard design, the integrity of the sport is assured.



Many targets were out in the open at Cambridge

My point is this. Apparently, shooters in certain parts of the Czech Republic operate a system whereby if a shooter is found to have queried or 'called' a target, and there is subsequently no fault to be found with the target, then the shooter gets 'zero' scored for that target. This would certainly focus the mind as they say, and perhaps put a stop to too many shooters, however well intentioned, effectively trying their luck. Food for thought perhaps and something I like to think could be incorporated into future rules.

For pre-booking application forms and downloads regarding established UKAHT events (where bookings are still possible), and all the latest information on anything connected with Hunter Field Target shooting, take a look at the following websites:

<https://sites.google.com/site/ukahft/>
and www.shooting-the-breeze.com <https://sites.google.com/site/whfta1/>

In addition, details of the new HFT Masters events can be seen at www.hftmasters.net

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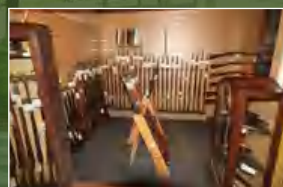
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Air Arms .177 Alpha Pro air pistol	£640
Gamo .177 Junior Hunter - junior air rifle 5ft lbs	£90
Diana .22 Model 280 Carbine	£278
Walther .22 Century Rifle inc 6x40 Walther P/A scope	£290
Walther .22 Terrus. Composite stocked rifle	£225
SMK .22 XS78 Bolt Action C02 Rifle	£129
Swiss Arms .177 P1911 C02 Blow- back pistol	£110
Webley .177 MK6 C02 powered revolver	£200
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James Osborne says: "just because I didn't go doesn't mean I'm not going to report back to you all on it"



The 2015 WFTF World Champion, Sergey Zubenko



A few of the boys relaxing

And despite the fact I didn't go, I really enjoyed the event, which surprised me. I kept up to date with proceedings in Lithuania via Twitter and the Internet shooting forum Shooting-the-Breeze, where twitter updates were relayed with great efficiency and posts came directly from participants.

I was surprised by my own enjoyment because I don't really follow any sports, be they on the TV, radio or internet. Occasionally I do get caught up in some of the big televised events such as golf's Open but I don't go out of my way to watch. Participation is more my thing, it is nice to marvel at the expertise of top sportsmen (and women of course) but particularly from the stand point of having tried (and usually failed) in any given field of competition.

FT APPRECIATION!

So maybe it is because I do compete in FT and appreciate what it takes to win any competition, that I found myself glued to my phone for a whole weekend during August, constantly checking for updates. Luckily for me, my wife didn't mind this, she is always gawping at the screen of her own phone, so barely noticed my sudden interest in these most useful yet frustrating of gadgets.

I've competed in several FT World Championships over the years and as with most other shooting events, it isn't really about the shooting. It's about the whole experience; visiting a new country, experiencing a little of the

culture, shooting with new people, overcoming language barriers and being able to say in the future that you were there. Obviously the competitive side is very important too and not quite knowing how good the competition is from around the world certainly adds an element of excitement. The atmosphere is like no other shoot and it is simply because the world title is at stake and it might just be your name going on that trophy.

REMOTE VIEW

So through the medium of the internet this is how I saw the World Field Target Federation 2015 World Championships unfold.

Firstly I didn't even know who was competing from the UK, I wasn't going so I didn't really care - I'm quite self centred. I hadn't even looked at the websites relating to the shoot. It was only after I had shot with one of my Air Arms team mates during the final round of the BFTA GP series and I discovered he was going to be shooting in Lithuania, that I thought perhaps I should at least find out a little more about the event for future conversational use. So when I had the opportunity (probably while at work) I discovered the dedicated World Championship website.

My first surprise; a decent website, professional looking and not at all like I was expecting, with a lot of well presented information. My second surprise, the

**The not so victorious English team****The victorious Welsh, winners of the team event**

photographs of the venue made it look stunning, lakes and woodland in fine weather. This was good promotional material and it put two thoughts in my head. Firstly that this year's World Champs would be well organised and run, and secondly I suddenly wished I had taken the chance to go.

SAFE, SOUND & READY

The first reports back included a few hastily taken photographs and confirmation of everyone's safe arrival, even if that didn't necessarily include their luggage. Luckily for Dave Penman his rifle had made it and his fellow UK competitors found enough gear between them to clothe him until his suitcase

**Steve Privett, Spring Gun World Champion**

did turn up. Those initial reports also backed up the promise of the website with regard to the organisation.

As shooting commenced on the first day of three, posts began to appear and it seemed there were a few nervous starts. It also became clear very quickly that the marshals weren't shy about docking targets from shooters for infringement of the rules. Fair enough you may say, but it is more complicated than that, and a debate for another time, as a whole article would be pushed for space.

Unofficial results from day one for the UK shooters soon came through along with others of interest. Official results were posted on the website promptly for those of us left at home to

study and a gallery of photographs uploaded too for a little visual stimulation. Jack Harris from Wales was in the lead with an excellent 49 ex 50 and he was closely followed by many of his Welsh team mates as they took a commanding lead in the team event.

CONDITIONS GOOD, SCORES HIGH

Day two followed with the same routine of updates throughout the shooting, followed up with the official results and some more photos. The conditions were fairly benign and scores were once again high. Jack now shared the lead with Russian Sergey Zubenko; each only having missed four targets from 100 with the title still within the grasp of many shooters. It was all getting a bit too much for me and I was glad I wasn't there after all.

I still had my phone glued to me, as the final day got under way but I'm afraid the mobile technology let me down. I kept on checking but the lack of a data signal meant only frustration as the hours of the competition rolled by. By the time I rejoined the 21st Century it was over, the unofficial results were in and it appeared that Sergey had beaten Jack by a single target, with his third 48 ex 50 of the weekend, some impressive shooting and certainly worthy of a new World Champion. I was enormously disappointed for Jack but I suspect it is only a matter of time before he too gets his name on the trophy. There was British success in the Springer Class, as Steve Privett scored an amazing 45 on his final day to overcome an eight target deficit.

WISH I WAS THERE

Clearly following any event in such a remote manner as I did the World Championships is no substitute for actually being there. But it is better than nothing and when I'm chatting to those who did go, I might not feel quite so left out. The hosting of this event appears to be getting better and better and the UK has its chance in a few years time; maybe we'll have some live video streaming by then. My final word has to be a big thank you to Neil Thorneycroft, for supplying all the photos.



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Bruce Potts looks at the .25 calibre, to see what it offers and where it fits into the hunting scene

Calibre is a very personal thing, be that with rimfire, shotgun, centrefire or airgun, everyone has their own choice, experiences, likes and dislikes. I have my favourites for sure but I think that each calibre has its own unique place in the hierarchy of cartridges, with specific tasks it does well.

None more so than the .25 cal air gun pellet. On first looks everyone says slow and heavy, with a trajectory like a fully laden dustbin but look closer and the big lead slug has certain merits. What the .25 calibre offers the hunter is sheer short range knockdown power. In that I mean whereas the smaller more common .177 and .22s can over penetrate a rabbit or pigeon and thus lose some energy transfer to the animal, the big old .25 often stays inside the carcass and expends all its energy within the vital area. This gives it excellent hunting potential, so long as the range is kept below the 25yard mark.

NOT SPOILT FOR CHOICE!

No surprise here, there is less choice in the pellet selection department than the more

common .177, .22 or even .20 cal pellets but there is still enough choice for certain game to get the job done. Problems really come with barrel dimensions. Generally speaking .25 bores are on the tight side and some European pellets are a real tight fit, which will affect both accuracy and general performance!

I was able to source 13 differing .25 pellet types ranging from domed to hollow points and finally pointed types. Each sample of ten were weighed and the average result taken to gain an accurate weight for calculations later for velocity, energy and trajectory. Due to the varying sizes and head and waist dimensions and tight bores on some .25 rifles it can be prudent to use a very handy tool such as a pellet sizer.

There are two types, both swaging a pellet through a metal die to correct dimensions, one is a large flat cylinder with many holes through which pellets are sized, this is available from PCMB for £25 (www.pmc.co.uk) The one which I own is the T. R Robb single pellet probe sizer which is more time consuming but just as

accurate. For testing I used my trusty BSA Tactical, Hatsan Dominator 200 and a Theoben Eliminator to give an overall impression of 12ft/lb against FAC-rated performance.

TRAJECTORIES

To me and I have said this before many times; an FAC air rifle helps flatten your trajectory, especially with a .25, so less hold over is necessary. The advantage of this calibre is that big old pellet bucks the wind better, so less compensation for windage adjustment is necessary at range and it retains energy better if the pellet is aerodynamic enough, not all .25's are though. Zeroed at 20 yards an FTT pellet for example travelling at 476 fps will also be zeroed at 10 yards, useful if a sight height of 2" is used but at 25 yards you are 1.1" low and at 30 yards 2.5" low. Velocity drops from 476 fps at the muzzle to 381 fps at 20 yards and 340 fps at 30 yards with energy figures of 9.9, 6.35 and 5.1ft/lbs respectively.

The Rhino pellet flattens the trajectory a tad more at 510 fps for



The .25 cal is perfect if you keep the ranges short, so ferals and rats around the barns are .25 cal territory



This FAC-rated .25 cal Theoben Eliminator is a superb longer range heavy hitter



T R Robb's pellet sizer in .25 cal certainly helps to uniform the large .25 cal pellets

11.03 ft/lbs so zeroed at 20 yds is low by -.6" at 25 yds and at 30 yds -1.9" low. Every fraction of an inch counts in .25 pellet world! Up the velocity from the Eliminator to 730 fps with the FTT pellet and when zeroed at 30 yards it is also zeroed at 15 yards, -4.5" at 50 yards and -12" at 70 yards. Energy at 30 yards is 13 ft/lbs (more than a 12 footer at the muzzle and at 50 yards is 8.0ft/lbs.

FIELD USE

That brings me to the use of this type of rifle, as the calibre's main benefits to a sporting user is its tremendous close range energy-shocking factor, or wallop! With a slow moving projectile, with that high sectional density the trajectory will be curved, although it will retain energy longer, but if you keep your shots well under 25yds, 20yds is better you have a sledge hammer in your hands. Past that range and drop/compensation becomes too great and the slow pellet does not have enough velocity to penetrate, it rather releases most of its energy externally on impact and not internally, not so good! That is not to say that at 40yds, it is not

RESULTS

BSA TACTICAL

PELLET NAME	WEIGHT	VELOCITY FPS	ENERGY FT/LBS	ACCURACY, INCHES AT 20 YARDS
BSA Pylarm Swaged	19.1	506	10.86	0.65
BSA Pylarm Unswaged	26.2	498	10.52	0.53
Bisley Pest Controls	24.6	293	4.99	0.77
Bisley Super Fields	27.3	316	5.5	0.85
Ram Points	19.7	268	4.36	1.25
FTT swaged	19.2	483	10.21	0.66
FTT Unswaged	24.6	476	9.9	0.68
Rhino	19.1	510	11.03	0.46
Spitz Kugeln	26.2	268	4.36	1.53
Korea	35.4gr	To tight	-	-
Gamo Hunter	21.4gr	407	7.87	1.10
Logun Penetrator	19.2gr	368	5.77	0.95
RWS Superdome	25.0gr	312	5.41	0.85
RWS H-Point	31.0gr	373	9.58	1.15
Marksman	19.0gr	480	9.72	0.98

RESULTS

THEOBEN ELIMINATOR (OLD MODEL AND NEW MODEL AS INDICATED)

PELLET	WEIGHT (MEAN OF FIVE)	VELOCITY	ENERGY	ACCURACY AT 40 YARDS
Marksman	19.0gr	739.3 fps	23.1 ft/lbs	0.95
Bisley Superfield	24.6gr	660.4 fps	23.8 ft/lbs	0.85
H&N FTT	19.2gr	728.9 fps	22.7 ft/lbs	0.64
(old)		790.4	27.6	0.50
H&N Rampoint	27.0gr	592.8 fps	21.1 ft/lbs	1.6
(old)		664.5	26.8	1.5
H&N Spitz Kugeln	25.1 gr	632.0 fps	22.3 ft/lbs	1.45
(old)		686.9	25.8	0.5-1.5
BSA Pylarm	18.8gr	724.1 fps	21.9 ft/lbs	1.8
(old)		767.0	24.6	0.75
BSA Pylarm (swaged)	18.8gr	706.0 fps	20.8 ft/lbs	2.0
Bisley Pest Control	26.2gr	623.5 fps	22.6 ft/lbs	0.57
(old)		680.7	26.8	1.0
Korea	35.4gr	To tight for barrel	n/a	n/a
Gamo Hunter	21.4gr	682.9 fps	22.2 ft/lbs	1.55
Rhino	19.2gr	722.3 fps	22.3 ft/lbs	1.31
Logun Penetrator	25.0gr	658.7 fps	24.1 ft/lbs	0.62
RWS Superdome	31.0gr	573.2 fps	22.6 ft/lbs	0.73
RWS H-Point	26.4gr	645.6 fps	24.4 ft/lbs	1.8

► accurate, it is, but that is not the purpose of this calibre. That's where the FAC-rated .25 cal takes over, increasing range to 50 yds or so. Even at these velocities energy is good but trajectories are a tad curved.

Also with 12 ft/lbs rifles there is less over penetration at close range and therefore if shooting in a factory at feral pigeons, the pellet stays within the bird and does not damage any of the surroundings. One thing to remember however is that slower moving heavy objects ricochet more than fast moving light ones. When hit squarely in the chest or head the quarry literally lift off their feet with the impact.

LAST EXIT

There are usually no exits when chest shot but total penetration on most head shots is normal. Where the big .25 pellet wins is if you keep the range short and allow all its energy to transfer into the animal for very satisfying humane kills. Increasing the velocity would destroy this ability at close range but would give it more legs for longer shots only. The Theoben therefore at closer range obviously needs a little more care, as the up-rated power will over penetrate at close ranges but out past 25 yards the energy or kinetic transfer between pellet and quarry is visual and audible. A very satisfying "whop" as that pellet connects.

My 12 ft/lbs choice would be the Rhino or BSA Pylarms out to a maximum 20-25yds but for the Theoben FAC-rated rifle I would choose either the FTT's, Logun Penetrators, RWS Superdomes or Bisley Pest Controls as all were accurate.

CONCLUSIONS

Not for everyone and as a one rifle calibre then for sure the .177 and .22 would be more versatile. But most airgunners I know have more than one gun anyway and with some .25 rifles for under £300 they are worth a try.

I had the new Hatsan Dominator in .25 to test, which performed very similarly to the BSA Tactical but with a 10-15% power increase but a fuller report will be coming soon, as I have not finished with my interest in this cal yet or bigger, oops spoiler!

CONTACTS

CH Westons 01273 326338 Pellets, air rifles s/h Theobens
Uttings www.uttings.com Pellets
BSA www.bsaguns.com Tactical .25 cal air rifle
Edgar Brothers 01625 613177 Hatsan air rifles
Terry Robb www.trrobb.com Pellet Sizer
www.pmc.co.uk Pellet Sizer



Due to differing sizes in bore dimensions, it is best to test as many pellet types as possible, to ascertain best accuracy



(Left) Feral pigeons are good .25 quarry as they hit hard, do not over penetrate and are relatively safe to use in the farm yard



The Eliminator likes the Logun Penetrators and shoots tight groups

FTTs are always a good, consistent, accurate pellet in most calibres and especially so in .25 cal



Left to right: BSA Pylarms, Bisley Superfields, RWS H Point, RWS Superdomes, FTT, Logun Penetrator, Ram Points, Rhino, Spitzkugeln, Pest Controls, Gamo, Marksman and Korean

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SS12.15/26/e

The BSA Lightning XLT handles superbly, has a super smooth cocking and firing cycle with a low muzzle report, little recoil and is extremely accurate

Pete Wadeson tests the BSA Lightning XLT and although eventually set to be superseded, reckons it's one of the finest springers the company have produced to date...

A FAREWELL TO ARMS

Relatively recently BSA up-graded virtually all the air rifles and gave them an 'SE' denotation. Some, such as the XLT or as it's often known the 'Tactical' model of the Lightning also received these up-grades but in my opinion didn't seem to be given the attention it deserved. Particularly when you consider the stock was altered quite dramatically.

As I've previously tested the XL Tactical before the 'up-grade' I not only felt it long overdue I tested the 'XLT' model but also give it the coverage it deserves before it's 'eventually' superseded. That may sound strange but let me explain: As we moved into 2015, BSA informed me they'd eventually be

changing this model offering it in a different stock design. Possibly by the time you read this, most likely at the IWA Trade Show in Germany its successor will have been shown to the public. However, the company also stated there was still good stocks (no pun intended) of this particular model and many retailers in particular will still have them on their racks. In that respect judge for yourself if you feel you should grab yourself one during this period of change.

STOCK EXCHANGE

Immediately noticeable is the High Impact Polymer stock has now forgone the original's dedicated right hand roll over cheekpiece, to be replaced by a fully ambidextrous jobbie. This newly configured, relatively high and very well-defined cheekpiece finishes at the shoulder with a very generously sized ventilated black rubber butt pad.

The neck is slim, while the steep drop down pistol grip is quite thick set. This palm swell giving the trigger hand a very good hold and by way of offering extra grip there are large raised 'textured' panels set either side of the 'handle' and three set either side

of the forend. A generous thumb shelf is also incorporated into the design to allow for a 'thumbs-up' hold.

BSA have also proudly moulded in their 'piled arms' logo towards the base either side of the butt section and talking of moulding, the rifle now has a sling swivel stud ready fitted under the butt section to pair up with the one installed at the rear of the silencer at the forward section. The forend is relatively slim and tapers sharply upwards to end in a semi-Schnabel tip!

As this is a scope-only rifle, no prizes for guessing that BSA has retained the Maxi-Grip scope rail they fit to many mechanical action air rifles in their stable. That rail and rubber cushion design is kind on any optic but later, upon firing the XLT, it became obvious recoil isn't an issue, so the raised nature of this 'unit' helps the action be suitable for both large and smaller objectives. However, as I feel a more general spec' hunting optic to be the optimum companion to this rifle I opted for a Hawke Airmax 4 – 12 X 40AO in medium height mounts.

SMOOTH AND SOLID

The cocking stroke was super smooth and made easy, as the full bodied yet relatively slim silencer makes for a handy cocking aid.

The newly configured and well-defined cheekpiece finishes at the shoulder in a ventilated, black rubber pad. The neck is slim, while the steep drop down pistol grip is thick set



BSA fits their Maxi-Grip scope rail to all their mechanical action air rifles, which is gentle on any scope – note the scope mount arrestor bolt at the rear



The forend is relatively slim and tapers sharply upwards to end in a semi-Schnabel Tip



The top quality, adjustable 2-stage trigger trips cleanly without a hint of creep - note the manual safety lever positioned above and to the right of the action

Once cocked you can clearly see the large, wedge-shaped detent lock and chunky breech seal that when closed lock everything up with a solid and secure feel.

The test rifle was in .22 calibre, so I set a sensible 25yd zero, even though in the right hands, the XLT is capable of kill-zone accuracy at ranges far exceeding that! But in most cases this is the sort of rifle where you'll be taking on quarry at ranges from approximately 12 to 30yd. Accuracy proved most pleasing and from a stable rested position using H&N Field Target ammo I was soon able to print ragged ½" groups at my set zero.

Other features that impressed (besides the stock design) are the slim, full-length integral sound moderator and the responsive 2-stage, adjustable trigger. As for the former, it's quite a dominating feature of the rifle, as it almost fully shrouds the 10" barrel and upon firing does a very fine job of taming muzzle report. If you need even more sound suppression, what initially appears to be the rounded muzzle of the silencer is in fact a removable end cap. Once unscrewed, it reveals a ½" UNF male thread, which of course will accept a wide variety of off the shelf 'cans.'

However, do take into consideration the extra length a secondary moderator would add to the gun and in my opinion for the

PETE WADESON SAYS:
"However, do take into consideration the extra length a secondary moderator would add to the gun"

minimal amount of extra sound suppression one would give – you'll equally lose out on the rifle's inherent compact handling attributes.

The 2-stage adjustable trigger unit was originally and specifically designed for the XL series of springers and here on the XLT it gives the shooter a very high level of shot control. Straight from the box, a gentle squeeze of the nicely curved metal blade showed it breaks crisply and cleanly without a hint of creep. It also has a practical and user-friendly manual safety lever positioned above and to the right of the unit.

CONCLUSIONS

BSA has put a lot of time and effort in developing a very fine roster of air rifles, of

which the Lightning XLT is a prime example. It handles superbly, has a super smooth cocking and firing cycle with a very low muzzle report, little recoil and is extremely accurate. With all those favourable attributes I'm sure many will agree that the 'current' BSA Lightning XLT is one of, if not the finest spring-powered air rifle BSA has produced to date. And no matter what we might see in the future, this is without doubt going to be a very hard act to follow.

THANKS TO

T & J. J McAvoy LTD for supplying rifle on test

Contact: 01257 426129

www.guns.gb.com

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name	BSA Lightning XLT (Tactical)
Type	Break-barrel, spring & piston, single shot
Stock	Synthetic sporter
Sights	N
Grooved for scope mounting Y	
Patented maxi-grip scope rail for dedicated scope use	
Length	37.5"
Barrel	10"
Weight	6.7lbs un-scoped
Calibre .	22 on test .177 & .25 available
Price	£319
Contact	www.bsaguns.co.uk (for nearest dealer)



You can clearly see the large, wedge-shaped detent lock and chunky breech seal that locks everything up for a solid and secure feel



The 'current' BSA Lightning XLT is one of, if not the finest springers BSA has ever produced and is without doubt going to be a very hard act to follow!

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 AIM Field Sports,
 01606 860678
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Lying down on the job

Pete Wadeson tests the versatile, yet specialised AIM Field Sports Mat Bag Combo and reckons it's as equally useful for field or range use...

Most long range target shooting is done from the prone position off a bipod. Similarly, when lying up in ambush, I more often than not do the same thing! I mention this as the AIM Mat Bag Combo is just as the name indicates. A gunbag that 'opens out' to be a bona fide almost dedicated padded shooting mat. This is a multi-purpose, double-duty accessory and is made from 1000 denier Cordura, with medium thickness, closed-cell foam padding; all handles are box stitched for extra strength and will take a scoped rifle with bipod of up to 48" long.

It's of a 'wrap-around' design, utilising three well-padded rectangular sections that fold around the rifle to offer a high level of protection and for ease of opening when you need it to quickly transform into its other guise as a shooting mat. When closed, it measures 12.5" X 51" and when open it's 38" X 49." You'll notice the discrepancy in length due to the fact it uses a removable 'drag hood' for extra security at the muzzle end.

When closed, it fastens together wrapped around your rifle using six, adjustable QD buckles positioned along the top, plus two on either side, that secure the detachable drag hood. To hold the rifle secure in transit there is a butt pouch and 3 internal Velcro fastening securing straps. For ease of transportation there's an adjustable



Keeping the rifle secure in the bag for transportation isn't an issue, thanks to the internal rifle securing straps and butt support



The AIM Mat Bag Combo – top quality, reasonably priced and suited to both field and range use

shoulder strap, drag handle and padded wrap around carry handle.

OUT OF THE BAG

Once out of the bag, the rifle stock support can be folded out to reveal a useful 11 X 10" internal mesh pouch. To the left of this is an equally handy, internal Velcro-closed ammo pouch. Also at the top end at this position

are twin, rubberised panels that create a non-slip platform for your arms when prone. Right hookers will appreciate this while lefties won't necessarily 'feel' left out.

AIM Field Sports are fast becoming a company to look to for the more 'specialised' types of gun luggage and have thoughtfully grown their product roster in this area to suit various shooting requirements. Of those I've tested – including several Drag Bags - all have been of a very high standard of build, design and practical function.

Though it has no external stowage I don't see this as a major problem, as it is a specialised bag for the purpose of carrying your rifle and then comfortably shooting prone. Target shooters mostly have range bags for extra kit and ammo but the hunter has a rucksack or bum bag for their extra needs! Available in Lincoln Green, I'd certainly now choose the AIM Mat Bag Combo as my first choice when planning some 'waiting up in ambush, sniping bunnies off the 'pod'.



The 'combo' easily and quickly transforms into a very useful shooting mat – note the twin rubberised panels on the inside when fully deployed as a shooting mat

FOR

Build quality,
 design, ease of
 use and versatility

AGAINST

Not a Lot

VERDICT

Purpose built
 for shooting
 Definitely one
 to consider

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NIP & TUCK!

Peter Knight continues his makeover of a Remington Express springer, with some modifications perhaps not for the faint hearted!

Last time out, we tinkered with the main action. This time, I'm tuning the trigger, (not a task for the fumble fingered); replacing the parachute seal with an O-Ring kit from Vortek, (not for the weak of thumb); and cutting a lump off the end of the barrel, - not for the feint hearted! Part 1 in November 2015 shows the basic strip down.

THE TRIGGER TRANSFORMED

The trigger is fine as standard and better than many in this price range but they are also my thing and I am sure I can tune it more to my taste. It looks similar in design to the Weihrauch Rekord unit but made from, understandably, cheaper parts. The pull is too heavy and the difference between stage one and two is too great, the movement too rough and the second stage too creepy. Piece of cake!

Please stay within your capabilities. Do this incorrectly and you can make your gun

unsafe! I suggest you just work on the easier bottom half of the unit (fig 1); remove the trigger weight adjustment screw (grub screw and spring behind the trigger blade) then the two long loose pins and the trigger blade and lower sear will fall out. If you insist on delving into the upper parts where all the springs are, then if you remember where they hook onto, fig 2 may help you get it back together!

STAGE STRUCK

The difference in 'stage one' and 'stage two' weights is easy to fix. We need to reduce the length of the top face of the trigger blade, by removing metal at the rear. Once this is done, polish the top and rear faces. You can see the difference in fig 1 & 3. Fig 3 shows how much metal has been removed. This reduction in length of the top face of the trigger blade changes the leverages and brings the two pull weights closer together.

The golden rule for triggers: any two metal surfaces that rub together, must be polished. Please note; NOT reshaped, re-dimensioned or re-angled just polished. I generally use P1200-P2400 wet and dry and a flat surface. You are aiming for a mirror finish (fig 3). Do this to all the areas of the sears that rub together. Finally, remove the spring washers one at a time (fig 2) to reduce the second stage travel. Remove too many and the trigger will not set. I lightly oil the polished areas and pivots. By lightly I mean a drop of oil on my finger and rub it onto the metal.

A CLASSIC SEAL UPGRADE

If you remember, the original parachute seal was damaged during manufacture and I cleaned it up as best I could. I have two alternatives from Vortek (UK distributor - agrtuning.co.uk) as replacements. A Pro-seal and an O-Ring seal, both 28mm diameter and 'borrowed' from the Diana



Fig3 – Note the shortened top part of trigger blade



Fig5 – Don't aim the screwdriver at your hand...



Fig2 – All the working parts for the brave



“Please stay within your capabilities. Do this incorrectly and you can make your gun unsafe!”

range. O-ring kits are not always successful in break-barrels, due to the inconsistency of the action tube but I will try it first, as they are often considered to be superior.

Get a screwdriver between the seal and the piston and prize it off and pop the new one on. Yeah right! Getting the old one off is not too bad but do keep your piston holding hand out of the path of a slipping screwdriver (fig 5).

Putting the new one on is a different story. It's akin to getting a 20" bicycle tyre onto a 21" rim! With mighty thumbs, a small parallel punch, a bench and several cups of tea I managed it in as few as 40 minutes...

Popping the O-ring on (the kit comes with two) was a doddle. Fig 7 shows the new seal and O-Ring in place. Standing alongside is the old seal, and the unused Pro Seal option. With the new seal in place, just add a smear of grease.

RESULT SO FAR

Time to reassemble the rifle and see if I have just been wasting my time? I used a little more grease on the main spring this time, just a light brushing mind, to see if I could reduce the twang a little. Luck was on my side (helped by the judicious cleaning of the inside of the action tube last time), the O-ring kit has worked a treat.

After just a dozen or so shots to settle in, power is up a little and the firing cycle seems quicker. The twang is still there; in fact, with the piston now moving more freely and faster, this annoying noise is if anything just a little worse!

Fig1 – The easily accessible sears



Fig7 – O-ring on, next to the original, next to the unused Pro-seal



Fig11 – Good and square, so minimal filing is the way to go





Fig16 – I prefer it shorter

► TIME FOR THE HACKSAW

I wanted to shorten the barrel. It's not choked, so I can just lop a lump off the end and re-crown it; sounds simple enough! This should make the rifle less hold sensitive, as well as easier to handle. It will of course make it harder to cock, so a good test is to move your hand down the barrel to make sure the cocking effort is OK for you and make a note of the desired length.

Remove the foresight holding screw and tap off with a friendly piece of wood. I used tape to mark my cut line, keeping it as square as possible. I suggest you keep the barrel at least 30cm long, as not only do the firearm's laws gets more complicated if it's less than that, you won't be able to cock it! I chose to remove about four inches, leaving about 15".

The squarer you can cut it the less filing you will have later. Because square it must be; if not, the pellet's base will not exit the muzzle crown at the same time, which does nothing for accuracy or consistency! **YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!**

Be brave, take your time and use long slow cuts whilst checking you are staying square. (fig 11). Use a file and then wet



Fig18 – 17 attempts later and finally one for the wall!

and dry to finish. Roughish but square will work, mirror finish but sloppy will not!

CROWNING GLORY

If you don't know – the crown is a small chamfer at the muzzle, which to a degree protects the end of the rifling from damage, as it's now recessed. I use a ball bearing and wet & dry paper (fig 12), rotating and circling the barrel. Some use a brass, round-headed screw and the lucky ones use a lathe! It is critical that the crown is an even depth all the way round and has no sharp edges. Use a cotton bud to see if any strands get caught and/or, use the point of a fine hypodermic needle to 'feel' for any burr. You will see in fig 15 that I also put a flat on the top of the end of the barrel to align the foresight should I

re-fit it. I re-blued the end using a Birchwood Casey touch up bluing pen and when all reassembled was rather pleased with the new look (fig 16).

BUT DID IT WORK?

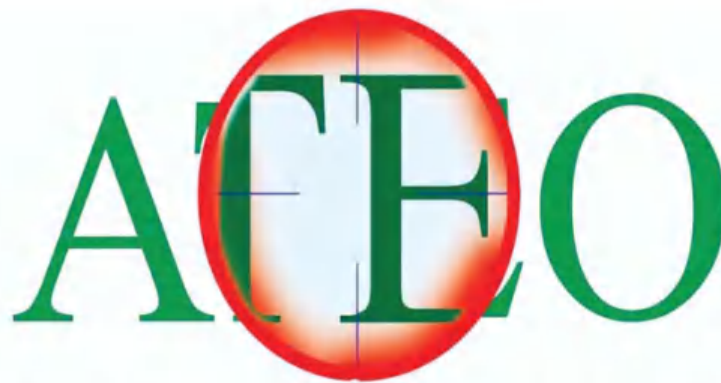
Yes and no. The trigger is lovely, the twang is annoying and the faster lock time and handling are great. It gives a very consistent 11 ft/lbs and the cocking effort is fine; but a little uncomfortable with the foresight back on. But what about the groups? Well, they are consistently better than the unmodified rifle but not as good as I had hoped. Fig 17 shows a typical 3/4" 25 yard group which is easily achieved. (Did you know that a 20p piece has a constant diameter?). The supplied scope has been fine and has not moved. I will however try a different make/model, to see if that helps accuracy. Overall though, this is a good value rifle/scope package, which can be enjoyably improved. I will say again; the work is easy enough to accomplish, given you have knowledge of tools and their use, an idea about mechanisms is useful too. However, if you do not feel confident of your abilities, then don't.

Fig15 – Who needs a lathe!



Fig12 – The ball bearing method should give a more consistent job





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Stylish

YET PRACTICAL

The Hatsan Striker proved accurate enough for field use

Mark Camoccio casts his eyes over another Hatsan springer and reckons it's a bit of all right!

Stylish and functional - the foresight assembly, which doubles up as a cocking aid

Stylish and effective - the Striker 1000S from Hatsan

Modern airgun production really has become a global phenomenon and one of the biggest winners in recent years has been the Turkish arms manufacturer, Hatsan. Producing much of the modern Webley line-up has played a big part in raising their UK profile, along with a string of value for money shotguns of course. On test here is one of their own branded airguns, produced specifically for Edgar Brothers- the Striker 1000S.

It's a fairly standard spring-powered, break-barrel design, yet with some distinctive detail and bold layout, it deserves a full appraisal. I got to grips with the scaled-down Striker Junior when that came out a while back, yet whilst the 1000S is the full powered adult version, tipping the scales at a mere 6.6lbs means that it can be carried in the field over an extended session, without becoming too much of a burden.

PLASTIC FANTASTIC!

Black or grey synthetic stocks are of course, all the rage, and the one fitted to this Striker 1000S certainly looks the part. Maybe a little hollow sounding, with the result that it

feels slightly tinny to the touch, yet get into the aim, and it really handles nicely! A well shaped, thinned down grip and nicely profiled forend tip, all help the cause. Whilst those highly attractive rubber inserts, applied to the forend and grip, are not just cosmetic, as they really enhance the feel. My test model came with grey inserts, but orange, yellow or dark grey are also available, to jazz up the looks, depending upon how garish you choose to be!

Part of the runaway popularity of these tactical-style stocks lies in their total practicality. Plastic requires no maintenance and unlike traditional timber will not warp and swell up, when taken out in the wet. Of course in reality, this technical benefit is largely academic, as many shooters will only shoot in dry conditions, yet the advantages remain. The down side comes with the increased resonance and noise that comes from a semi hollow design. Tapping the cheek piece, gives the game away, but to many, some additional action noise is a small price to pay. As for why so many models now include super hard rubber pads at the shoulder, I'm not so sure.

↑ FOR

Great value for money
Good accuracy potential

↓ AGAINST

Stock resonates a bit

→ VERDICT

Price and ability makes it worth consideration
Looks good

PLUS

On the plus side, open sights are supplied as standard, and since they are of the fibre optic variety, this is cause for celebration. Hatsan call theirs 'Tru-glo' and a super compact, yet perfectly functional rear unit features green elements to create the notch, whilst the stylish front assembly includes a protected, hooded bead- this time in red. Open sights are always an invaluable introduction to general shooting and for any juniors and novices on a limited budget; it can also help delay the additional cost of adding a scope.

The Striker's moulded plastic barrel assembly sees the actual barrel tube set back a couple of inches from the muzzle. Yet the design isn't claimed to be a silencer in any way, intended no doubt to purely double as a cocking aid.

GETTING SET UP

Fitting a scope is easy, with a good run of dovetail rails to play with. In addition though, a small arrestor block is supplied, screwed to the rear of the receiver, allowing for mounts to be placed up against it. Scope creep is therefore all but eliminated and it's a clever touch from Hatsan; adding little to production costs, whilst solving a basic problem with spring-powered rifles.

Cocking is pretty easy, with the breech breaking open with no real force needed. Having that barrel assembly adds real leverage too with the actual stroke being very manageable. Final lock-up does sound a bit rattly though, which is surprising, given the design features an articulated cocking linkage, which, impressively, is even cushioned via a spring loaded runner, to eliminate vibration. Good attention to detail then and with an integral, anti bear trap system in place, safety hasn't been overlooked. On that subject; an automatic safety catch, courtesy of the (Webley Omega style) push button at the rear of the cylinder, comes into play. Whilst it's easy to nudge it off with the thumb each time, it does mean that the mechanism cannot be de-cocked.

BUILD

When Hatsan first began manufacturing Webley models, I for one was less than impressed with some of the final finishing processes. These days, their production techniques have undergone some distinct refinements, and as a result, their current offerings are a huge improvement. OK, look closely inside the breech, and some uneven machine marks are still in evidence and the chemical bluing process still falls short of many rivals! Yet overall, and certainly for the money, the standard of manufacture is pretty



Looks familiar? That safety catch is a giveaway to Hatsan's link with the Webley brand

damn good. Plastics used for the safety catch, trigger guard, and that super stylish barrel assembly, are par for the course, and precisely moulded components are always the saving grace.

And so to the business end, how does this Striker 1000S handle and shoot? Well in short, I was genuinely impressed. The stock is fairly conventional in styling admittedly, yet that slim line grip and those highly comfortable rubberized inserts, just add to the final feel.

Yes, there is some spring resonance during the shot cycle of course and the semi hollow sections of stock will only accentuate that but overall, very mild recoil and a pleasant firing cycle makes this Hatsan a winner where it matters. Over my 30 yard test range, I could group comfortably within ½" using Air Arms Diabolo Field ammunition, although Edgar Brother's own pellets, whilst fairly consistent, failed to impress, being tight in the barrel. Quality ammo so often pays dividends though, and with the Air Arms (JSB) also recording a 10-shot spread of just 12 fps over the chrono, these were clearly the Striker's diet of choice.

CONCLUSION

If the truth be told, this Striker 1000S bears more than a passing resemblance to the equally impressive Webley ValueMax, sharing as it does, a few key components. That said,



Rather nice fibre optic sights are fitted as standard with this rifle

the striking stock alone, assures a distinctive profile, setting it apart from its rivals. In short, Hatsan have really upped their game, with the result that many of their latest offerings are capable of solid, serious performance that should begin to worry several of the established big players on the airgun scene. At £146, this model is something of a bargain, with serious accuracy (with the right pellet) and consistency that frankly we have no right to expect at the price. OK, final refinement and finish maybe give the game away, but for a budget hunting option, or perfect beginners gun, it does the job nicely!

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name	Hatsan Striker 1000S	
Type	Break-barrel	
Calibre	.22 on test (.177 available)	
Weight	6.6lbs	
Length	44"	
Barrel	16"	
Stock	Polymer composite (orange, yellow or dark grey inserts also available)	
Trigger	2-stage, adjustable unit	
RRP:	£130	
Velocity	AA Diabolo	Edgar Brothers
	High	585fps 646fps
	Low	573 624
	Ave	580 635
Spread	12fps	22fps
Energy	11.95ft/lbs	11.8ft/lbs
Contact	Edgar Brothers Ltd, 01625 613177	



The Hatsan Striker 1000S certainly handles well

MIXED BAG



Graham Allen spends a productive morning at his local permission with a compact BSA Ultra.

It's a real privilege being able to test and evaluate air rifles and general shooting related kit and it's great trialling different guns up at my local farm shoot. There will always be vermin around on any farm or smallholding and keeping on top of it is vital if the place isn't going to get overrun with pests. Feral pigeons aren't in the huge numbers that they once were on my shoot, as hitting them hard in the early days really paid dividends and persuading the farm staff to repair a gaping hole in the side of one of the barns has denied the winged invaders an easy path to a cosy home.

WINGED INVADERS

Unfortunately, another pest seems to have increased dramatically over the last few years and that is the ring necked parakeet. Now, unless you live in the South East of England, you'll probably think I'm pulling your leg but these non-native birds have bred like mad over the last 20 years. So much so it's now possible to see flocks of hundreds at a time and they generally roost in tall trees such as poplars.

They cause a huge amount of damage throughout the areas in which they live but apple orchards in Kent and Sussex really suffer when the birds appear in the spring and strip buds from the trees. I've seen them decimate conker trees as well and a flock will move through the trees stripping away the outside of buds to get to the soft, juicy centre. They can be quite aggressive too and I've seen them chase off blackbirds and magpies in the past. I've even seen them nesting in what were previously woodpecker holes; a mob of parakeets soon evicting the previous occupants! They can be a real nuisance in domestic gardens too and bully other birds away from bird tables and feeders.

I decided long ago that I'd try and reduce their numbers whenever I came across them but they're usually buggers to shoot, as they seem to disappear amongst the leaves of the trees they're in; it's especially bad in spring when the leaves are a light green colour, which matches the bird's plumage perfectly. I'd heard quite a few up at the farm in early summer, so I decided I'd try and bag a few on my next visit.



An inquisitive cow checks out the author's decoys

UP AND AT EM'

I was armed with a .22 calibre BSA Ultra SE, which was ideal for a wander around the farm and I'd got up really early, to make sure I was ready for when the birds started to arrive. I put out a few FUD pigeon decoys near a cattle feeder, along with a plastic crow. I set up camp below an oak tree and I could hear the parakeets screeching as they flew in. That was when I hit a problem; I just couldn't see the little devils, even though they were only just above me! It's amazing how difficult it can be trying to pick them out, even with a monocular! I only got lucky once

Come out, come out,
wherever you are!



Graham Allen using his
Land Rover for support

“Some animals are just too stupid
for their own good and this was
in my favour this day”

Their dispute allowed me to get within 25 yards, so the first corvid in my sight went straight down, which caused its companion to take flight. I thought I'd sit tight for a while and sure enough, after a couple of minutes, a

shadow overhead signalled the return of crow number 2. I knew not to look skywards, as a flash of human skin is just the thing for startling quarry; I often wear a facemask whilst hunting to prevent this but I'd left it on the bonnet of my Land Rover! Sitting still paid off though and a flash of black in the corner of my eye alerted me to the presence of the hungry scavenger checking out his dead mate. A shot to the back of the head may not be a gentlemanly thing to do but I'm not a gentleman when it comes to a safe, humane shot; so that made 2 crows in the bag.

FERAL SURPRISE

Some animals are just too stupid for their own good and this was in my favour this day, as when I went back to the Landy to retrieve my facemask and have a swig of coffee, a feral pigeon landed virtually at my feet! It started to peck around on the concrete, eating spilt animal feed and gradually moving away from me. Pigeon's heads seem to be constantly moving, so a headshot can be quite tricky but as it's the shot I prefer to take

on all quarry, I just had to wait a while. At about 15 yards the pellet's impact was quite loud, which caused another, unseen feral, just round the corner to fly away and land near the cattle feeder in the field nearby.

I tried getting as close as I could without being seen but that part of the farmyard offered no concealment, so I just had to take it really slowly and wait until the pigeon was head down in the hay surrounding the feeder. I was just getting comfortable on the gate, using my beanbag seat as a rest, when the bird suddenly flew away. I was sure I'd been ultra stealthy (and had my facemask on again!) but it wasn't my fault, as some sort of bird of prey had just flown overhead. My intended target soon returned though, so that was 1 parakeet, 2 crows and 2 feral pigeons in an hour and a half; not a bad haul but there was to be one more victim.

when one of the birds flew onto a more exposed branch. A Crosman Premier pellet to the side of the head killed it instantly but it did the usual and clung to the branch it was perched on for what seemed like ages. Luckily it dropped onto the ground, as I've had them lodge in trees before.

COMPOSTING

I could still hear a couple of parakeets above me and they'd not been bothered by their mate falling of his perch. No matter how I shuffled about, I just couldn't get sight of one, so decided to try my luck near the compost heap, which proved to be a wise move...

All sorts of stuff gets dumped on the compost heap and it's often a good spot for ambushing vermin such as rats but it wasn't rodents I could see as I approached. There were a couple of crows picking through the leaves and general farm waste, looking for their breakfast. Crows are usually off as soon as they see a human but on this occasion I was in luck, they were more intent on squabbling over something.



Spilt animal feed soon attracts vermin

► ONE MORE FOR LUCK

I'd just started to pack away my shooting gear, as the farm staff would soon be arriving but as soon as I'd put the little BSA in its case, another parakeet flew down onto one of the bird feeders. I soon had the rifle out again and I fed a couple of pellets into the 10-shot mag. Braced against a shed, I knocked the green

menace off the mesh tube with a clean headshot. I just had enough time to retrieve my kill and pack away again, before I heard the main gate open.

It had been a lovely, productive morning at the farm and the contents of my gamebag would come in handy a couple of nights later as (rather smelly!) fox bait.

CONTACTS

BSA Ultra SE Multishot and Essential 3-9 X 40 scope:

www.bsaguns.co.uk

Crosman Premier pellets: www.a-s-i.co.uk, 01728 688555

FUD Decoys: www.bushwear.co.uk, 0845 226 0469

Lightweight mesh balaclava: www.jackpykeshop.co.uk, 01636 672023

Beanbag seat and double pellet pouch:

www.customsportingmatsandhides.co.uk, 01268 655179



Feral pigeons, crows and parakeets ended up as fox bait

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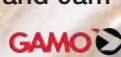
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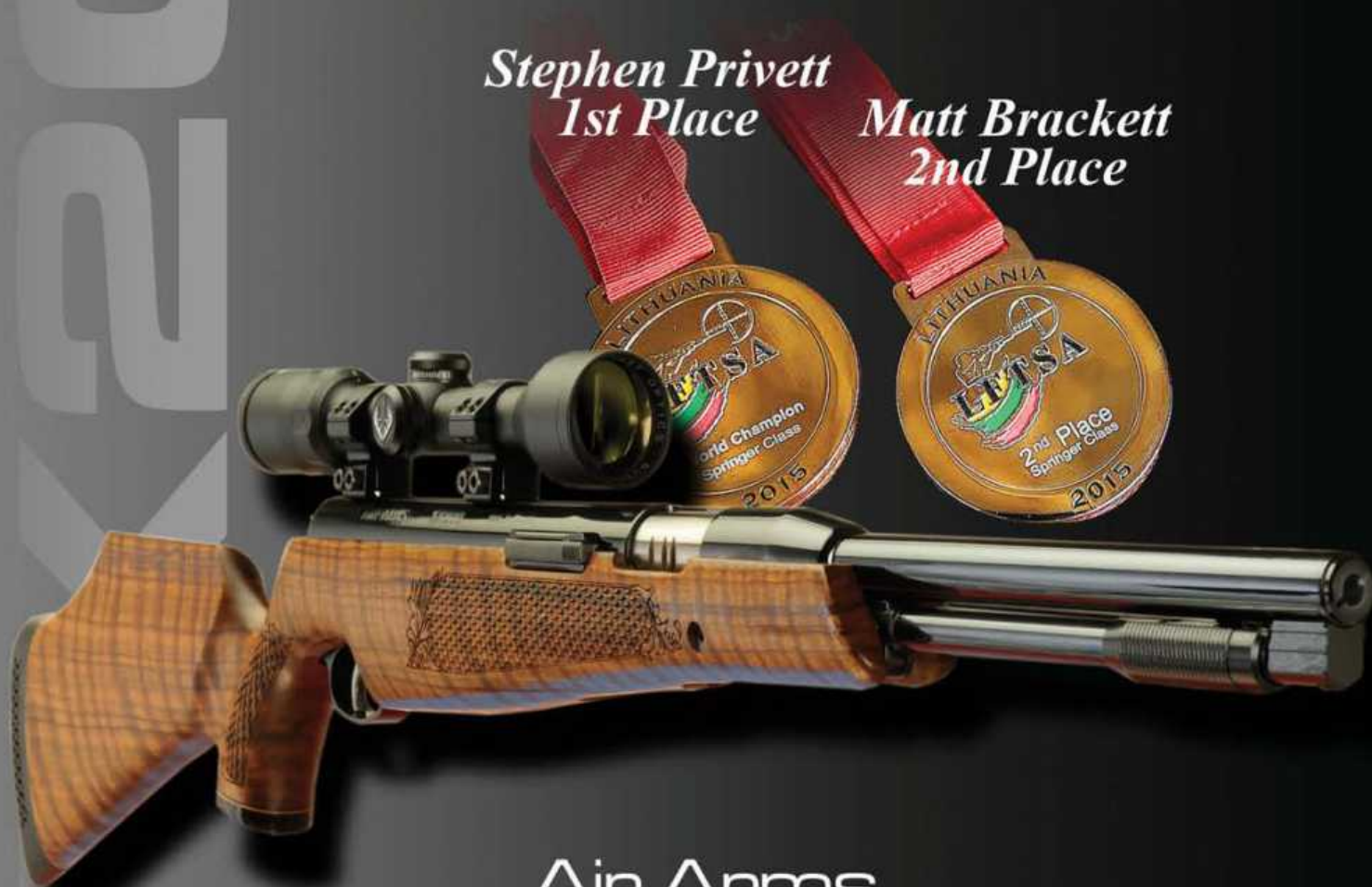


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Illustration is of a carbine model - scope not included. Medal images supplied courtesy of Audrius Turskas.
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THEOBEN SIROCCO 2000

RAM!
RAIDER!Secondhand
FOCUS

Mark Camoccio revisits the scene of a crime as he looks at some serious airgun history

When Dave Theobald and Ben Taylor first sat at a garage forecourt, back in the late '70's, and dreamed up how the concept of a motorbike suspension fork could be applied to the power-plant of an airgun, history was unwittingly in the making.

After much toying with prototypes, the gas-ram concept materialized and the Sirocco was born in 1982 - an airgun that used a gas-strut or ram in place of a mainspring. With no spring to wear out or resonate the resultant characteristics of the firing cycle were to prove ground breaking. An ultra fast lock time and a unique snap action drew many to the fold; yet to be fair, it didn't kill off the traditional springer as we know it. What it did do however, was offer a serious alternative for an army of enthusiasts; eager to subscribe to the Theoben way.

VESTED....

As one of the very first customers (a rather lanky teenager if you must know) at the original Theoben works in Cambridgeshire, when Dave and Ben had just released the walnut stocked custom version of their famous Sirocco rifle; I have to declare an interest in the brand. I went on to attempt a trigger mod, which allowed the gun to spring out of my hand, and managed to split possibly the most delicious slab of English Walnut you're ever likely to encounter. It remains the most fantastic gun stock I have ever seen on an airgun to this day. My stock was replaced of course, but oh dear!

SECOND HAND BEAUTY....

On show here is a later example- the Sirocco 2000, complete with what the company termed their Trans-Port Diffuser silencer and it's still rather a

beauty. Serial number TB14677 (probably placing its production date between 2000 and 2002) shows on the underside of the cocking linkage and this was apparently a regular feature of these models. The HE system was patented by Theoben in 1990, and cleverly featured a small dummy inertia piston inside, which went some way to counteract the whiplash of the piston's reverse travel, at the end of the stroke.

The quality woodwork is classic Custom Stock of Sheffield, with deep hand-cut chequering, an attractive matt oil finish and Parker Hale soft rubber butt pad. Those raised finger panels on the forend look the part too and with a right hand dedicated grip and thumb shelf to the rear, it still handles brilliantly.

FIXED RINGS

Theoben opted to fit their own mount rack to these guns too, so the scope rings are effectively bolted into set mounting positions. Blueing was always superb from the company and the condition of this second hand example is pretty good, with just a few scuffs on the moderator.

The power adjuster still shows to the rear of the action and here, the old 'Slim Jim' style hand pump can be used to adjust the gas-ram pressure if deemed necessary. Look for signs of rough linkage here, possible evidence of a previous owners attempts at increasing the power. Check the breech for slackness (as with any break-barrel). Otherwise, these models are pretty sound.

BARGAIN!

At £350, this Sirocco seems like a fair deal to me, for those eager to grab a piece of Theoben's illustrious past, and with the company as it was, now consigned to the history books, I'd say it probably represents a good investment! Thanks go to Steve Dixon, for the chance to give this beauty the once over, and if you're interested give him a call on 01205 311246/369470 mob07901985799.

Country Sporting Guns can be found at Punchbowl Lane, Brothertoft, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE20 3SB Open Mon-Sat inclusive 0900-530



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Price: Diffusers £60.00, Bridge Section (spider) £65.00. Outer Baffle £100.00. Tube Set (includes inner with back nut) £60.00. Rear Bush £12.00

Contact: UK Custom Shop Ltd, 01905 797060, www.shopatukcs.co.uk



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The A-TEC WAVE 22 rimfire moddy weighs 3 ¼ oz and measures 135 x 30mm. Inside is a one-piece, aluminium core, cross-drilled similar to the SAK, at the rear is a small expansion chamber and up front a plenum-type void, which allows the bullet to transition from a still air environment. Standard thread is ½ x20 UNF with the option of ½ x 28 UNEF. The Wave was tested on both 22 Long Rifle sub-sonics and a 17HMR and did the job! A-TEC quotes a reduction of 26-36 DbA, soon to be available will be a carbon fibre version!

Price: £34

Contact: Jackson Rifles, 01644 470223, www.jacksonrifles.com



£849

Down Under

Lithgow Arms LA101 CrossOver is this Australian company's first new rimfire bolt-action. The build is sport/varmint, with a synthetic, heavy profile stock and 20.9", medium hammer-forged barrel. The 3-lug action locks at the rear, the safety is rear/right of the action and the receiver comes with Weaver-type bases. Feed is from a CZ 452 clone magazine and it will also accept the originals too. Lithgow uses a removable spacer on their 17HMR gun and can use the CZ mag again. The 22 LR gun will soon be followed by a 17HMR too. Great shootability and accuracy and soon available in walnut and laminate furniture.

Price: £849

Contact: Highland Outdoors, 0845 099 0252, www.highlandoutdoors.co.uk



£1800

The All Rounder

Leica's Magnus 1.5-10x42 BDC is one of those new breed of scopes that offer an extended zoom range of x6.7, which makes it versatile from close range driven boar to longer distance deer. This example will appeal to those who like to dial in the range, as it offers a ballistic elevation turret - ASV. With a locking ring, it takes moments to dial in the target, knowing the setting won't shift. Optical and build quality are excellent and there's an illuminated reticle with the night and day setting, plus a seamless adjuster. You can get ballistic-specific replacement ASV rings with data from Leica's website to match up with your ammo. Great scope with or without ASV!

Price: £2150 Non ASV £1800 **Contact:** Leica Camera UK, www.uk.leica-camera.com



£640

Cheap Trick

Mossberg's MPV Varmint offers a target/varmint-style centrefire, with a laminate stock; the 223 Remington version feeds from a 10-round AR15-style magazine and can also use real AR mags. The 24" medium weight, fluted barrel shows a 1-9" twist rate. This will have great appeal for both foxing and paper punching. The action is pillar bedded and sits on a removable polymer block, which is also the magazine well. Unlike some modern rifles, the MVP shows a proper recoil lug. The trigger is adjustable and the receiver comes fitted with Weaver bases; all this at a great price, 308 Win is also available!

Price: £640

Contact: Saddlery & Gunroom, 01959 573089 York Guns Ltd, 01904 487180

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Quickload (Version 3.9) and Quick Target Ballistic programs are the ultimate computer-aided reloading programmes for those who want the best out of any calibre! There are 1200 cartridges, with new factory and wildcats updated all the time, and over 230 powders, and 2500 bullet choices. It allows you to understand the effects of pressures, velocities and energy by changing single or multiple parameters.

Predictions regarding barrel length, temperature changes, bore friction and bullet seating depth can all be loaded and checked on screen in safety. Used wisely, you can load up your favourite cartridge or create something new and simulate its ballistics and trajectory with a click of the mouse.

Price: £125

Contact: JMS Arms, 07771 962121 or 01444 400126 www.quickload.co.uk



£125

Hot tub Brass Machine

The LEM Electromagnetic Case Cleaner is a wet machine that uses steel micro-needles agitated by Neodymium magnets to scrub inside and out. The bowl holds up to 300 cases and is topped up with water with a squirt of washing up liquid. After 20 minutes, they come out clean and smooth, longer gives better results, with the primer pockets and flash holes being cleaned too. LEM supply a needle recovery magnet, so you can separate them from the dirty water. It's certainly an effective system, though the brass needs drying.

Price £365 and Deluxe £395 (timer)

Contact: Henry Krank & Co Ltd,
0113 256 9163



£365



£95

Sling It!

The Javelin Super-Lite Carbon Fibre bipod offers a cant & swivel adjustable design attached by a magnet, so a true QD function that you fit when you need, but where to carry it? The manufacturers Spartan Precision Engineering have hooked up with sling makers Niggeloh and come up with the Niggeloh/Javelin sling. Made of leather and brown neoprene, this fig-8 shaped design features two pockets so that the folded pod can be accessed easily whether you prefer a muzzle up/down carry. A rotary flap in the middle keeps it secure; a definite case of 'if you have one of these, you'll need one of those'!

Price: £95

Contact: Spartan Precision Engineering, +44 (0)1892 300220

Imitation Is...

The SRC17 is the latest entry into the long barrelled 22 semi-auto pistol stakes. Glock-like, it uses an alloy frame and dedicated 22 rimfire TacSol slide. Legally it conforms to the UK requirements of a large firearm, being 24.1" overall with a 12.1" barrel and a fixed butt extension to make up the length. Feed currently is from a 10-shot magazine, but there are plans for a 15 and 25-rounders. It comes with a dummy moderator and iron sights and uses the Glock striker-fired, hammerless mechanism with trigger safety blade. If you're looking for something different this might be it!

Price: £1199, Spare mags £35

Contact: Suffolk Rifle Co, 01473 730035



£1199

Speed Freak

The Lightnin' Grip Loader makes short work of filling most hi-cap 22 LR magazines! It consists of an ammo hopper that takes 50-rounds, with integral grip and operating lever. It can handle most magazines using separate adaptors. Dump in 50-rounds and shake them down into the feed trough. Hold it up at about 20° off vertical and squeeze and release the lever which will push a round, base-first into the feed lips, then seat it. Operation is fast and near 100% efficient. Testing with Butler Creek (10/22) and S&W mags showed a 50% reduction in filling time to approx 25-seconds – it works!

Price: £30, Mag adaptors £8 each

Contact: Black Rifle, 01604 806 303
www.blackrifle.co.uk



£30

Economy & Accuracy

Hornady's Steel Match uses steel, polymer-covered cases for economy, with their bullets in 223 Rem (55 & 75-grains) and 308 Win (155-grain) in a choice of BTHP match, HP and FMJ projectiles. Cases are Berdan-primed and non-corrosive, ammunition comes in boxes of 50 with a polystyrene liner. Testing was done in a 20", 1-8" twist straight-pull AR and a Howa 1500 Varmint bolt-action, 1-10" twist and 24" tube. Both loads proved reliable and accurate, with no issues on primary extraction. Two cost-effective and accurate loads for two popular calibres.

Price: £46.33 per 100

Contact: Edgar Brothers Ltd 01625 613177



£46.33

New Look

Swarovski's EL Range laser rangefinder binoculars are an impressive design. The major differences is the rounded bases to the body tubes that hold the laser sender/receiver. They offer selectable yards/meter notation and angle shot calculation in two modes- auto-corrected distance or angle only. With signature, green armour and separate barrel dioptre adjustment, they are literally brilliant. New is Swarovski's Field Pro Package EL, with QD neck strap and quick lock dials. They have also re-designed the rear eyepiece cover and integrated the hinge for the objective lens caps into the objective rim. These features go to make this excellent design just that bit more field-friendly!

Prices: 8 x 42 - £2,440, 10 x 42 - £2,520

Contact: Swarovski UK Ltd, 01737 856812
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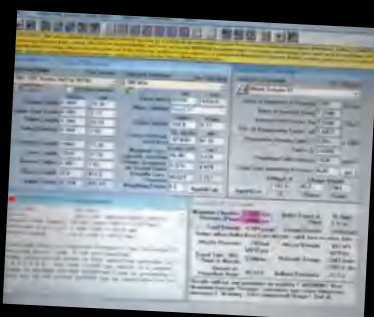
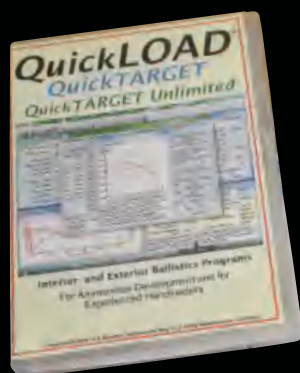
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A 21ST CENTURY STG



Pete Moore tests yet another rimfire imposter, in the form of Walther's take on Heckler & Koch's G36 German service rifle

FOR

A reliable shooter
Dares to be different

AGAINST

Trigger a bit heavy
Controls a tad basic

VERDICT

Well worth consideration
Don't be put off by the polymer build

The 22 rimfire, military look-a-like shooter is well catered for these days, with guns as diverse as the German MP40 SMG up to the latest Beretta ARX 160 and everything in between! But it's to Carl Walther we look to this month who make the Colt Tactical, Uzi and Heckler & Koch 22 rimfire clones; to this they have added the German Army's current battle rifle the Hk G36. In terms of popularity it has become the thing; with many countries opting for it as their 5.56mm battle rifle and police forces worldwide. It also seems to have replaced the MP5 as 'the gun' in many films and TV programmes.

NOTORIOUS

The G36 is the latest in a proud line of German combat rifles - from the first true assault rifle the StG44 to the 7.62 NATO G3. However, in the real world the G36 seems to be having accuracy issues due to it overheating in fire fights and it looks like it might be replaced! But that is of no concern to us, as the Walther copy proved pleasingly reliable and accurate!

I noticed the rimfire version is not identical to the military gun, which has a large carry-type handle with an integral ZF 3x4° dual optical sight that combines a x3 scope with a piggy back red dot above it, made by Zeiss/Hensoldt. The Walther is based on the sport/civilian version the Hk243 (European) and HK293 (US) versions, which has a Picatinny rail with iron sights on top and uses the generic M16 magazine with a STANAG-type well, with side-mounted mag catch as



Yet more choice, the Walther HK G36 a nice alternative to the AR; note the massive free-float on the barrel



R/H note ambi safety, ejection port and case deflector, which also locks the butt

opposed to the military rear-mounted lever release with dedicated magazine.

POLYMER-TASTIC!

The G36 uses a lot of synthetic with the butt, mag well, pistol grip, forend and receiver all made of a carbon fibre-reinforced polyamide; doubtless the rimfire version uses something similar. The rifle is not that small at 37.8" overall with an 18" barrel, though not heavy at 6.75 lbs. It features a skeletonised, side-folding butt that reduces length considerably and makes for a compact carry. It gives a decent length of pull (LOP) and is rock solid in the shoulder. The pistol grip is comfortable but not overly large, above this is an ambidextrous, 2-position safety lever based on the selective fire Marine trigger group but with pictograms for SAFE and FIRE (semi-auto).

Moving forward to the mag well, the release catch is at the left/front and you have to pull the empty free while pressing the catch with your thumb. The forend too is separate and also pinned in place with stabilising yokes and lugs at the rear. It generously free-floats the barrel and at the

tip is a block with twin sling eyes, which I assume is also there to stop your hand sliding forward. There are integral, metal thread inserts; doubtless there to accept Picatinny rails for mounting accessories, though Walther does not included them.

The top of the receiver shows a raised, Picatinny rail for optics, with the front and rear iron sights pinned to it. The front is a fixed blade in a ring protector and the rear offers an L-flip aperture and is adjustable for windage and elevation (Walther include Allen keys to suit). Scope mounting is not a problem but due to the rear sight block you will need reasonably high mounts. Saying that, if you don't want irons then it takes seconds with a 1/8" pin punch to remove the roll pins and take them off. I shot the rifle for accuracy at 50 yards with a Vortex Viper PST 1-4x24 and for general work fitted my x1 Leupold Prismatic compact scope.

DIFFERENT STROKES

The butt folds to the right and is unlocked by a large, slotted button on the left of the hinge. When stowed, it locks into the case



L/H controls - mag catch, safety/selector and butt catch, the Picatinny rail is easily removed, as are the iron sights



Detail of ambi cocking handle, which is an integral part of the L-shaped bolt assembly



Butt folded, note the cut-out on the butt that allows you to fire it in this condition; not sure why you would want to

► deflector and is deployed by simply giving it a good pull to open. You can fire it in this position as there's a cut-out to allow case ejection. Most unusual is the cocking handle, which is an ambidextrous, hinged lever that sits below the Picatinny rail. Just reach in and pull it out at 90° and retract the bolt and let it go, it's made of polymer but certainly seems strong enough. The magazine is the same as that used on Walther's Colt Tactical and HK 416 22s and holds 20-rounds; 10s and 30s are also available. It has external, pull down tabs that makes loading easier and offers an automatic last round hold open. However, there's no separate bolt release like on an M16, instead you have to cock the gun with a full mag in to close the action. Inside the trigger guard is a small push up catch that allows you to manually lock the bolt open.

Slinging points are provided forward (left and right) on the forend, another on the rear left of the action and a fourth inside the butt plate web, a snap hook sling is required. Visually I like the G36 though would be the first to admit that in terms of controls it's less sophisticated than the generic 22 AR15! It has a good feel and heft and offers a decent length of pull and is a generally pleasing design.



Reliability was impressive across a broad range of ammo!

REAR ENTRY

Action-wise it follows the superior AR15 build with a bolt that is easily removed from the rear as follows: Remove the magazine and cock the action, push out the pin at the rear of the mag well and remove it. Remove the pistol grip pin (rear of the receiver) both pins move left to right, fold the butt and press in on the grooved lug at the rear and pull the grip down and off. Finally pull the complete bolt assembly/spring rearwards. This included the integral cocking handle, which gives the assembly an L-shaped look. Assemble in reverse order noting the mag well has forks at the front that engage with lugs on either side of the receiver. The job is quick and easy and there's good access for cleaning.

The forend can also be removed by pushing out the pin below the front sight block. It's then pulled forward and over the barrel, it has the same fork and lug fixing system as the mag well. The free-float is generous on the barrel and Walther has even included a dummy gas block. The barrel is solid and not the slim, rifled steel liner with an alloy sleeve over the top like that of the Colt Tactical and Hk416 guns and better for it.

THE NITTY GRITTY

Reliability is all with 22 semi-autos and I decided to push the gun to the limit. Ammo consisted of a cross section of over 600-rounds of mixed makes and powers. This included Winchester (Expert), Eley Match Xtra, PMC Match Rifle and RWS Rifle Match. Along with Fiocchi Standard and High velocity, with quicker loads from Remington Yellow Jacket and Cyclone and Winchester Laser. I tried both Winchester and MagTech sub-sonics but it was having none of it; no big deal as it's no hunter! The one major fail was the Remington Cyclone, which kept giving light strikes,

whereas their Yellow Jacket was fine. Reliability was awesome as it ate everything else I fed it and spat it out! Accuracy was acceptable at 1 – 1.5" @ 50 yards but the heavy trigger was not conducive to tack-driving performance; certainly unsupported. But in that it is what it is. Control-wise the L/H safety is too short and easier operated by the R/H lever with the thumb and trigger finger. Due to the position of the mag catch the empty has to be pulled from the well, though it goes in and out easily!

The butt is wide with a reasonably high comb. The Leupold Prismatic was high-mounted to clear the rear sight yet an acceptable cheek weld was maintained, equally so the LOP. Removing the rear allowed me to fit the Vortex Viper PST 1-4x24 in low rings, but the front sight obstructs vision a bit. If you're going with glass; take them both off! As the test progressed I found myself really liking it for its simplicity and reliability. OK, control functions are not as slick as my S&W M&P 15/22 and there's little you can do about the trigger apart from learn how to control it. But if I was looking for a more fun gun, with a deal of individual flair and 100% reliability, I'd go for the G36.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name	Carl Walther HK G36
Calibre	22 LR
Action	semi-auto blow back
Capacity	10, 20 & 30 (DM)
Barrel	18"
Weight	6.75 lbs
Length	37.8"
Sight	Y
Picatinny scope base	Y
Manual and auto hold open	Y
Folding butt	Y
Price	£599
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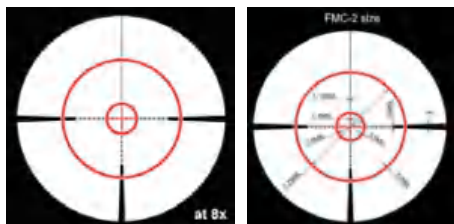
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Tactically Perfect

Pete Moore looks at a compact variable that just could be the AR15 shooter's dream optic

Not so long ago, a 1.5-6x24 compact variable scope was seen as the biggest magnification in its class, but these days the possibilities have improved vastly with the introduction of wider zoom ranges! This increase in useable magnification allows scopes to cover more than one base; my Swarovski Z6i 1.7-10x42 is a great example that allows me to shoot boar at 25/50 yards on x1.7, and then push out to x10 for 300/400 yard use with everything in-between! This trend has also started appearing in more tactically-orientated glass and a great example here is the March F 1 – 8 x24 FFP from their Tactical range - a design to warm the cockles of any black rifle shooter's heart!



Left: FMC-2 reticle at x8, it's packed full of information and not too busy either
Right: Detail of FMC-2 subtensions, it offers a lot of ranging and ballistic options

TACTICAL TIM

The designation offers a x1 – 8 zoom range with a 24mm objective in first focal plane (FFP). The advantage is that no matter what magnification you select, your aimpoints in relation to the reticle do not change! So no wasting time thinking what your drop value is at any setting. The downside is the reticle gets smaller/larger as you dial down and up, but I would say that March seems to have got the perspective right for all powers. Control-wise, this is a real Tactical Tim, as we shall see.

Starting at the rear, we have a lock ring focus system; slower than a fast focus but stronger and more secure. The magnification ring is aggressively slotted, with a raised blade for easier movement, operation is firm but smooth. The 30mm body tube shows a large saddle with a combined parallax drum and rheostat on the left. Turrets are medium height and wide, again with aggressive lugs for easy dialling; the build is completed by decent, flip-up lens covers. Weight is 22.6oz and length 10.5", the non-illuminated version shaves 2.85oz of that, so either way, not that big or heavy!



Turrets operate positively and the markings are big and bold too!

1/10TH MIL CLICKS

Click values are 0.1-Mil-radian, with 10-Mil per turn in both planes, March says you get 56 Mil full movement but I counted six full rotations giving a generous 60 Mil-radian in both planes. In old money that's 216" @ 100 yards; not too bad! Turret markings differ slightly, as do features; Elevation goes from 0 to 9 Mil with 0.1 sub-divisions and the fixed section has horizontal stadia to show where you are. Windage is split with a central 0 and 5 Mils either way, with all numbers being preceded by R (right) or L (left) to show direction, something I have always found most practical! The saddle too is marked with



directional arrows UP and R, I have found it can be all too easy to get confused in the heat of a competition when dialling under pressure, so every little aid memoir helps!

Zero Stop seems to be a feature that we all like on our tactical/precision scopes these days and the March does not disappoint! It's quite the most practical method too; no removing turrets and winding set screws or packing in shims, instead there's a slot head disc on the top of the elevation drum, which is marked O-SET. The process goes like this: back off the central screw until it's flush with the top of the turret (unlocked). Zero in the normal fashion, then, once sorted, back out the three grub screws in the rim and free wheel the turret to set 0 on the line on the

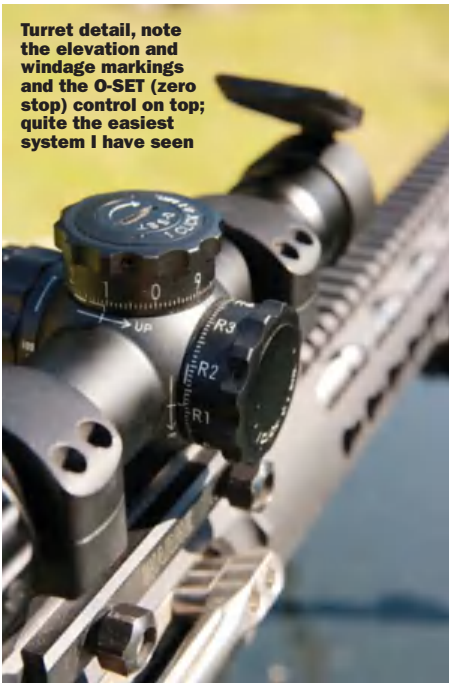


Detail of combined parallax/rheostat drum, battery is under the cap

saddle and re-tighten. Now wind in the (O-SET) screw until it stops and you have set the stop point, so even if you get lost in elevation you can quickly get back to your base position.

FMC-2

The 1-8x24 offers two similar reticule options (both glass-etched) – FMC-1 and FMC-2. You get three thick outer bars at 3, 6 & 9 o'clock and a fine cross coming down from 12 o'clock, which has 1 Mil hash marks. The centre cross shows a 6 Mil circle. Variations are: FMC-2, which has an outer 25 Mil circle too and at x1 the whole reticule floats in the view. FMC-1 has no outer circle and the reticule goes right to the edge. The March website has all the various subtensions.



Turret detail, note the elevation and windage markings and the O-SET (zero stop) control on top; quite the easiest system I have seen

Illumination (red) is controlled by a rubber button inset into the Parallax drum and offers four positions – low, medium, med/high and high. You just keep pressing to cycle up through the levels, then a fifth push turns it off. March offers the option of standard or low illumination modules. Quality is excellent; crisp with no flaring out, even at maximum and it shows up well even in bright light, in both FMC-1 and 2 only the circle/circles are lit.

My tester had the FMC-2 reticule, which I found very useful, at x1 the larger outer circle acts as a positioner for quick and more instinctive shooting. Equally knowing the two rings are 6 and 25 Mil respectively will help for ranging and the 1 Mil hash marks are good for both measurement and also hold over. The maximum mag of x8 will allow you to push out the range too, so don't just assume this is a shorter range optic. Glass quality is excellent with 'high end, extra-low dispersion (ED) lenses. The FFP Tactical range also offers 3-24x42, 3-243x52 and 5-40x56 options.



Just like Goldilocks' third bowl of porridge; not too big, not too small, in fact just right, especially with that x8 zoom range!

FOR

Well built, practical & versatile
1-8 zoom range
Well balanced FFP reticule

AGAINST

Not cheap

VERDICT

A high performing, mid range compact
Great glass for the AR family
though it's a lot more than that

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name	March F 1-8x24 FFP Tactical (illuminated)
Body tube	30mm
Reticule	FFP FMC-2 (on test)
Clicks	0.1 Mil
Clicks per turn	100
Full rotations	6
Exit pupil	8.6mm @ x1, 3mm @ x8
FOV @ 100m	35m @ x1, 4.3m @ x8
Eye relief	86-98mm
Side focus	Y
Illumination	Y
Length	10.5"
Weight	22.6oz
Price	£1751.80
Contact	March Scopes UK, + 44 (0) 1293 606901 www.marchscopes.co.uk www.marchscopes.com



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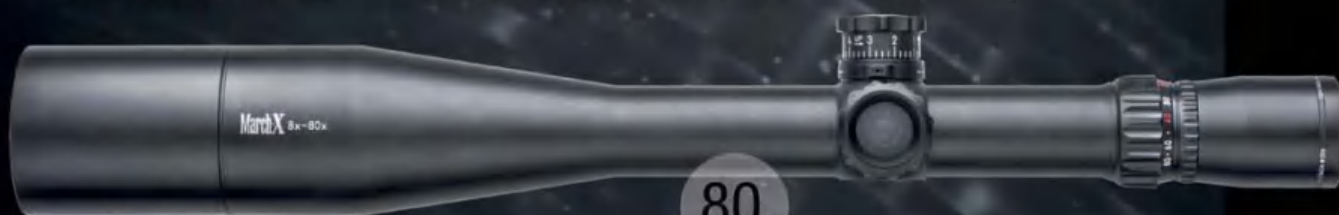
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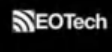
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The Case In Point

Chris Parkin finds what could be the perfect solution between discession and practicality in a rifle bag

As rifle cases seem to carry more and more equipment alongside a gun and ammunition these days, there has been a large shift towards the more tactical drag bags, some of which open out to also be used as a range mat. For those wanting to combine storage capacity with easy carriage and more discreet looks, the Wisport 120+ is a perfect solution.

DOUBLE RIFLE CASE?

With overall dimensions of 125 x 33 x 8cm, it's made from 750 Cordura and is available in Green, Brown, Black or two camouflage patterns. Lined with 30mm of removable egg box foam, it's destined to protect your equipment well. A 3-sided, twin direction zipper will open the bag fully to make it into a ground mat, either to spread your kit out or lie on to shoot. Each side has a fabric rim to retain your rifle and there are three lateral elasticated straps to secure your gun in place. Wisport also make a 100cm version for smaller guns but this 120+ cm version also has a zippered pocket that extends 21cm to allow longer barreled rifles (up to 145cm) to fit in. Perhaps not quite as well protected as a longer case overall but handy if your gun fits in without the mod yet occasionally, needs to be carried ready to go. You can actually fit two guns into this case



and it's a shame Wisport haven't twigged this and supplied a divider to go between but it isn't a huge task to supply a piece of cut foam yourself to further improve the case.

ALL THE GEAR YET NO IDEA?

There are the usual collection of outer pockets with two large main ones, incorporating smaller internals and all are a voluminous 40 x 35cm (4.5 litre capacity), enough to hold ammo, binoculars, spare clothing etc., every one individually zippered and secure, with internal sleeves preventing equipment rolling about too much and knocking around. Each of the two



That bit extra – foldout extension for keeping your moderator fitted; clever idea

outer pockets also supports a buckled strap to attach further gear, perhaps a full range mat roll or jacket. The now de-rigueur Velcro path sits on the front to attach your own logos to.

LONG TERM USAGE

The material is durable, doesn't seem to snag too much and also folds easily, which makes long-term storage a little less bulky. There are twin adjustable rucksack shoulder straps and a waistband for longer carries but unlike some heavier duty cases, are not padded; the 50mm wide straps intended for occasional use rather than everyday carry. The middle handle for lifting the bag is well reinforced and supports the long bag well, easy to retain its balance with weight added internally. The bag comes in at 2150 grams but for larger sporting rifles or even a pair, I think combines all the required factors well, without the 'tacticool' looks some prefer not to show.

FOR

Masses of storage
Doesn't feel too bulky
Folds easily and easier to fit in a car boot

AGAINST

Shoulder straps would be better more central longitudinally for 'rucksack' mode
Not supplied with a central divider

VERDICT

A nice option for multiple use with discreet looks
Great value for money



Plenty of room, as can be seen a divider would make it a double gun case



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Better Mouse Trap?

Pete Moore discovers a practical and cost-effective piece of AR15 furniture

As some of you will know, I'm in the process of pimping my SGC Speedmaster straight-pull AR15. Like most things, it started small, with an idea to free-float the barrel to realise its full accuracy potential. My first mistake was not using a 2nd hand float tube, if I had, it would have probably stopped there. But no, a Trinity Force unit proved much better and cooler looking and I was off! The Magpul MiAD pistol grip was left alone, as it's probably the best design there is, but that old A2 butt just had to go darling!

TOO HEAVY AND TOO MUCH

My thoughts strayed to something with both comb height and length of pull (LOP) adjustments that would allow me to improve and tailor my shooting positions for all uses. The prime contender was Magpul's PRS® Precision-Adjustable Stock. This big, clubfoot design was perfect, apart from its weight and price and it looked like the A2 would stay, when a conversation with Wayne at North West Custom Parts revealed that a company called LUTH-AR offer their MBA-1 (Modular Buttstock) that addressed my two issues with the PRS.

The MBA-1 is made of glass-filled nylon material and of skeleton design, which reduces the weight to just 1.26 lbs. Adjustments are made by thumbwheels; the rear controls LOP which is 10 3/8" closed and 11.5" fully open. The L-shaped butt pad is

Detail of LOP and comb adjustment, LUTH have kept it simple but it works; note the concave gripping hook and the Allan key clipped in



retained in position by vertical slots, so will not collapse under pressure. The clam shell style comb offers an inch of vertical movement and is controlled by the forward wheel and uses the same retention slots as the butt. It's also possible to move the comb back and front a little by removing the top and bottom screws and physically shifting it. One thing I did find out was the build precludes moving it fully forward. This was solved by filing material off at the bottom to allow this to happen. LUTH includes an Allan key to do so which clips into the butt.

CUT IT OUT!

Fitting is simple; remove the A2 butt by taking out the screw in the rear of

the buffer tube and slide on the MBA-1. Depending on the design, your original screw might be longer and as I discovered if used, short strokes the bolt. LUTH supply a shorter one, which solves that problem! Along with the adjustments, the design shows a concave gripping surface at the front, which is great for prone use. QD sockets are moulded in on either side and compatible swivels are optional, as is a fixed sling loop that fits into the rear. There's also a telescopic MBA-3 Carbine Stock for CAR15-types with all the same features, though the butt plate offers 3-way pad adjustment. LUTH also offer non-adjustable rifle and carbine models too - SKULLATON MBA-2 (rifle) and MBA-4 (carbine).

FOR

Great all round butt design

AGAINST

Not a lot

VERDICT

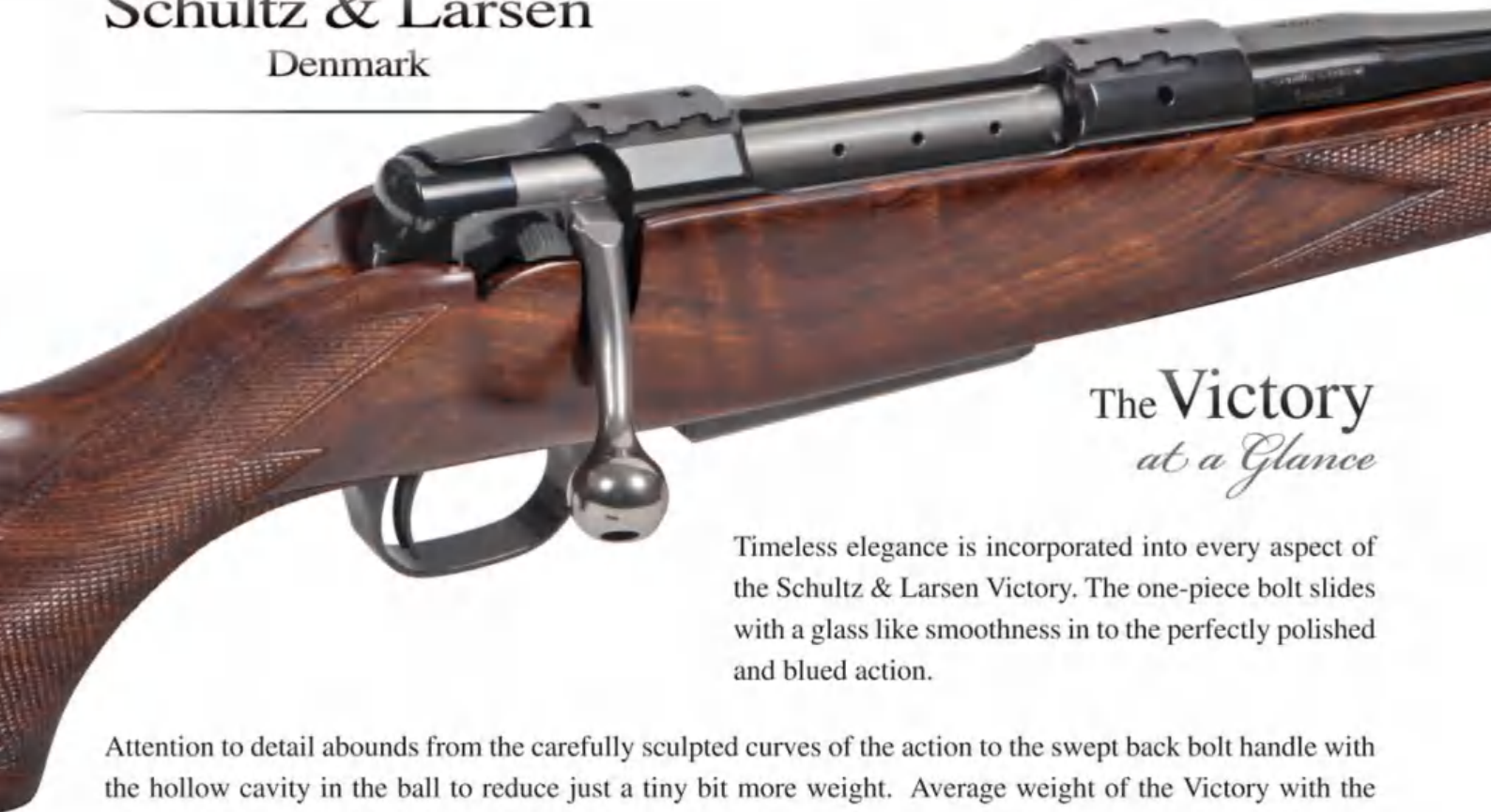
Practical in the extreme and well priced!



MBA-1 on my Speedmaster; it has transformed shootability and looks cool too

Schultz & Larsen

Denmark



The Victory *at a Glance*

Timeless elegance is incorporated into every aspect of the Schultz & Larsen Victory. The one-piece bolt slides with a glass like smoothness in to the perfectly polished and blued action.

Attention to detail abounds from the carefully sculpted curves of the action to the swept back bolt handle with the hollow cavity in the ball to reduce just a tiny bit more weight. Average weight of the Victory with the standard barrel is a trim 3.6 kg. Fluted barrels reduce this to between 3.4 kg and 3.5 kg. Magnum calibres come in at 3.7 kg. The Victory is available in Right or Left hand.



Standard recoil pad colour is brown but a traditional brick red pad is an option on the higher wood grades.

As standard, the Victory is equipped with the excellent Schultz & Larsen single stage trigger, adjustable for weight and length. The Schultz & Larsen designed and made double stage Match trigger is available as an option. On this trigger the first stage of the pull takes 60% of the total pull weight, leaving a final light and crisp second stage.



The Victory has a switch barrel system allowing the barrel to be changed for any other in its calibre group with just a simple wrench. The standard bolt can be used with all calibres in the standard calibre group but if changing to a Magnum calibre you will need to change the bolt.



The top of the Victory action is milled to accept the Schultz & Larsen 'Slide & Lock' scope mounts, incorporating Summer and Winter scope position. For those who prefer a different mount, the action is drilled and tapped to accept Weaver or other bases. The radius of the action is 17mm and the hole spacing 22mm.

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Short. 'n' Sweet

Pete Moore gets his hands on a sweet little classic lever-action carbine reproduction

I love lever-action rifles, in both pistol calibres and the bigger stuff and in my time have owned Winchesters, Marlin's, Brownings and Ubertis. In general, my preference is for longer barrels but my first rifle was a 16" Winchester Trapper 94AE (angle eject) in 44 Magnum. Sweet little gun but a bit of a kicker, however with the right cartridge and for the UK market, this size and length is about right for most general needs.

PISTOL CALIBRES BETTER

For 99% of the use this sort of rifle gets, performance is improved by opting for a pistol calibre; most sensible by far is 357 Magnum, which will also accept the identical but slightly shorter 38 Special (Spl). Truth is, for most needs the 38 will also offer cheaper ammo, better accuracy and reduced recoil; which equals better control and shootability. Two months ago I looked at Chiappa's Yukon in 44 Magnum, which is based on the Winchester 1892 and due to its powerful calibre, rubber-covered stock and stainless-type finish is primarily a tough, short-range hunter.

Fact is, Chiappa base the majority of their lever-actions on the 1892 mechanism and as I have said before, I consider it superior to the later

Winchester 94 in terms of strength, rigidity and operation! For today's shooter the only place it really

looses out is in the fact you cannot fit an optic over the action, due to it ejecting straight up and back. Marlin's 1894 and Winchester's 94 AE solve this by ejecting to the side. You can get a scope mount for the 92 but it attaches to the side and I have never liked it!

SHORT STUFF

The name Trapper signifies a rifle that is handy, light and easy to carry, much as you might want a long gun when working a trapping line that can shoot but also does not get in the way that much. Plus it also addresses our liking of short barrelled rifles. The build is what I would term – 'classic cowboy'! The furniture is walnut, with what appears to be a light varnish finish; the butt is straight

hand and finished with a colour case-hardened steel plate. The receiver and operating lever also shows this attractive and unique finish, as do the front and middle barrel bands.

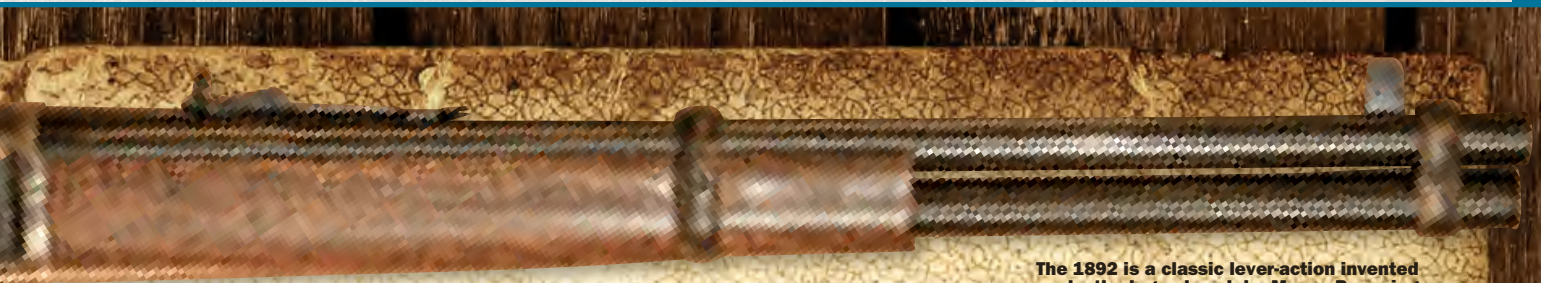
The forend is long on what is a very short rifle, which has doubtless been done to improve the gripping area a bit. The barrel and under slung magazine tube are blued, as are the bolt and hammer; here the quality of application varies and I'd say some parts have been struck off better than others! However, wood-to-metal fit is excellent.

Sights too are classic, with a semi-buckhorn, elevator/wedge U-notch at the rear, which also offers a small amount of windage adjustment by drifting left/right. Up front is a low block with a medium-height fixed blade pinned to it. Though all the correction is on the rear unit and I had no problems zeroing it with either 38 Spl or 357 Magnum, it would be possible to reduce the height of the blade by filing it, should you need more elevation.

ACTION STATIONS

I have always liked the 1892 action and its bigger brother the 1896, which Chiappa uses for its 45-70 lever guns, both of which were designed by John Moses Browning. Locking is by rising lugs either side of the bolt at the rear. Typically there's no safety catch, which this sort of rifle does not really require. Instead, the hammer offers half and full cock, the





The 1892 is a classic lever-action invented by the legendary John Moses Browning



Rear sight detail, in 38 Spl you are right at the top of elevation



Loading port detail, just shove them in any time you like

former offers a stand-off position, so that the pin cannot be struck. Traditional is the saddle ring on the left of the receiver, which originally would allow the rifle to be slung across the body on a carbine sling. I always find this feature annoying, as it has no real function and serves to make a noise and bang on the finish!

There are a number of options on the Trapper, generally all weights and dimensions are the same, with a 16" barrel, an overall length of 34" and weighing 5.7 lbs. You get the option of an octagonal barrel, steel, colour case-hardened forend cap and a magazine loop, as opposed to the full band. Rifling twist differs as to calibre, with three options: 357 Magnum/1-19", 44 Magnum/1-20" and 45 Colt/1-16". These being optimised for the following weights/calibres 357/158-grain, 44 mag/240-grain and 45 Colt/250-grain, all showing a 6-groove rifling form.



Action detail; note the colour case-hardened finish, operating lever and locking lugs

Picking either of the magnum options allows you to use the shorter Spl version too, which in the heavier recoiling 44 Mag make a great deal of sense, as 44 Spl is also highly accurate. My tester was in 357 Magnum and I used Prvi Partizan's (PPU) 38 Spl, lead semi-wadcutter and 357 Magnum plated, truncated cone bullets, both at 158-grain.



Chiappa 1892 Trapper; one sweet little lever-action carbine!

LOAD AND SHOOT

Loading is via a sprung gate on the right of the receiver, with rounds pushed in one at a time and it's here we really see the advantage of the 38 Spl, as you can get in 9 + 1 as opposed to 7 + 1 of the 357. The rifle loads easily enough, though I did find the last round required a bit of effort. Some say the shorter 38s might not feed as well as the 357s. I did find that in both cases you must fully cycle the action at a consistent speed; if not you can get misfeeds.

Over the chrono, the loads were producing very different figures; the 38s were averaging around 875 fps, with the 357s near doubling that at 1558 fps. There was an obvious increase in felt recoil, which was not unpleasant. With the lighter calibre, I found I had to give the rear sight maximum elevation too, though it was cock-on for windage! Accuracy was very good and with the irons I was getting everything in a 4" circle at 100m; not too shabby!

Overall a sweet little lever-gun in a sensible calibre and not badly priced either!

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name	Chiappa 1892 Trapper
Type	lever-action
Feed	tube magazine
Calibre	357 Magnum (on test)
Capacity	7 and 9 in 38 Spl
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SS11.15/40/f

SS12.15/16/e

All my stag stalking has over the years been primarily through rolling hills and dense forestry plantations that necessitate a long walk in and then carefully slow stalking through the timber or static positions looking down rides or logging tracks. The alternative has been in Sutherland where there are very few trees and you can walk miles, literally across hills covered in heather but the approach in my area was always a gentle gradient.

I was recalling a completely different experience to a friend the other day which reminded how difficult and thrilling a stag stalk can be, if you have the legs for it. Truth be told my old knees after 30 years trudging across bogs and up hills are feeling the pressure a little these days, poor old chap.

THE HIGH HUNT

This memorable stalk involved a two mile slog to a summit ridge at an elevation above 2500 feet with a professional stalker in Argyll. I normally hunt alone and on private land, but I wanted to try a traditional stalk on reds with a professional ghillie, so I contacted The Pierhouse Hotel at Port Appin Argyll on the shores of Loch Linnhe, run by the proprietors Nick and Nikki Horne. As well as an excellent sea food restaurant they can arrange excellent opportunities for sporting and deer stalking on neighbouring estates.

He's an interesting man, being the former organiser for the Camel Trophy events across the world and so has an innate love of the outdoors and whose brother runs www.gunsonpegs.com.

BOAT RIDE TO HEAVEN

Nick had arranged a day's stalking with Kurt Larson, an ex mining engineer. To get to the estate from Appin you need a boat crossing of some six miles across the loch to wildness. As I waited on the Pier House jetty I looked out across the water, which was whipped up by the usual gusting wind and rain, as a small white boat seemed to be tossed around by the waves. I was greeted by a broad smile of Kurt Larson as I embarked with rifle and binoculars.

As we bobbed along, it seemed we were air borne more than touching water! We chatted as we headed for the Morvern Peninsula. There are two Corbett Mountains on the estate, so over 2500 feet and yes most of the stalking is vertical with long walks in. This was going to be hard work and not for the faint hearted, oh hell!

Kurt knows every inch of the estate, with 50 stags shot a year and twice as many hinds/calves. This is red deer country, with any Sika ousted straight away to stop hybridisation and only the odd roe, which they leave to build up the population. There

On the

Hill



Micheal Skelly scans the dead ground and horizon for any movement.

is little forestry, just odd blocks here and there, it's primarily open hill and blanketed with magnificent heathers.

AIR AMBULANCE ANY ONE?

We soon docked on the estate's private jetty and was met by Kurt's head stalker Michael Skelly who was from Ulster originally and has

been a grouse keeper most of his life, so I was in safe hands. As is customary before the stalk a rifle test is mandatory and 3-shots from my Steve Bowers custom 30-47L rifle putting all 125-grain Nosler Ballistic Tip bullets into the centre of the steel plate at 100 yards. If you like, two estate rifles, Tikka T3s in .308 Win topped off with Zeiss Duralyt scopes are available on request.

Next we drove up the forestry tracks viewing the glens and corries as we went. The first was Corrie Ghardail, a broad sweeping glen surrounded by interlocking peaks and looked like a gigantic cauldron. Sure enough, a group of reds were feeding contently on its slopes but the wind as it was would give away our approach. Kurt suggested we park up and stalk down wind into the stags, this time with the wind on our

Bruce Potts samples the delights of Scottish hill stalking for the quintessential highland red stag



The new Zeiss 3-12x56 HT scope was magnificent out on the hill.



Very happy stalker, the climb, stalk and views plus excellent company made it all worthwhile.

right side. It would mean a long two mile walk in, "no worries" I said, oh how those words would come back to haunt me!

ON THE MARCH

We stalked the march between the neighbouring Laudale Estate. As we climbed higher, the grandeur of Kurt's land emerged, with views down to Strontian village where the element strontium was discovered and barite was mined until the 1990's. The weather waned between bright sun then downpours but it did not dampen the atmosphere as Kurt explained Kingairloch is a proud member of the Morvern Deer Management group, setting culling levels for over 15 years with accurate census work.

I usually stalk alone and so to me having stalkers like Kurt and Michael pointing out flora and fauna along the way really



Michael 'Mountain Goat' Skelly performs the gralloch, its nice being a guest and not having to do it.

enhances the experience and greatly brings to life the area. However, the slog in was getting steeper and my hill legs had left me, so frequent stops were needed, Kurt graciously explained "it's no problem, we are all here to enjoy the day", which was welcome but I did feel a bit of a Southern Jessie!

This thought was banished from my mind as Michael, leading the group, stopped and dropped to his knees with a hand gesture to indicate a group of red to our right. Sure enough a small crawl to a granite out crop revealed eight or so reds bedded down and chewing the cud, totally unaware of our presence. I pinged the range with the new Leica 1600 B range finder, 406 yards. We observed for 10 minutes Kurt and Michael assessing the beasts and although two were suitable to be shot the dead ground in front was too great to overcome and we would be spotted straight away. So we back tracked and headed ever upward. I huffed and puffed, Michael joking his finger was on the speed dial of his mobile phone for the Air Ambulance!

RAVENS CALL

Just as we came over yet another granite crag, Michael pointed skyward and two circling Ravens were a good omen. They had spotted us from above and knew that a free gralloch meal was on the cards if we shot a beast, so was a good sign some stags were nearby.

We inched our way to the top of Glas Bheinn and the gods must have been watching, as the sun broke through the clouds and bathed the hillside with light. We were literally perched on the edge of the cauldron, looking down into Corrie Ghardail.

Kurt spotted a group of over 120 red on the far slope, out of range but a spectacular sight of wild free deer and Michael kept scanning the eye straining outcrops for signs of life. A tap on shoulder from Kurt and a reconfirmation from Michael and a single immature beast was feeding ahead of us. Perfect cull animal and so Michael automatically slid down through the granite boulders, slowly indicating me to follow until ►

Winching the stag aboard the Argo cat and welcome relief for my tired legs.



► a near perfect plinth was found as a rifle rest.

Just as we watched a more mature stag, eight points with velvet in tatters emerged from behind the granite rock where the youngster was feeding. Kurt wanted this taken, so I waited until he turned broadside, the Leica 1600 B indicated a range of 141 yards and I lined up the new Zeiss HT 3-12x56mm scopes reticule for a heart lung shot with an adjustment of 2.0 inches for the stiff breeze.

The 125-grain Nosler struck its mark and the beast collapsed instantly, in fact Kurt remarked that he had thought I had neck shot it as it dropped so quickly, it's a good round the 30-47L!

FINAL DESCENT

Handshakes and broad smiles concluded a fantastic stalk and my legs felt instantly rejuvenated, now the work began! Kurt had to walk back to the pickup and arrange the estates Argo cat to meet us down the valley, whilst Michael performed the gralloch and assessed the beast. Now Michael had to drag the stag out, it was steep, very steep and gravity helped a lot but my god these



Kurt Larson brings my transport home with a nice stag and great memories

stalkers are tough. A quick rope tie around the antlers and Michael literally galloped across the glen with me struggling to keep up despite him dragging a stag!

The lovely sound of the Argo cat greeted us and the stag was winched into its loading bay and Bobbie the driver, 16

years on the estate, drove me to the larder, whilst Michael opted to walk back. He nearly beat us too! The scales read 173 lbs which is small by Kingairloch standards as a 245lbs stag shot last week was seen hanging in the purpose built estate larder.

All venison is processed on site and then supplies the estate's own restaurant 'The Boat House' on the shores of Loch a`Choire and also supply other shops and restaurants including The Pierhouse and even mail order through "Really Wild Venison". The little white boat was waiting for my return journey to the Pier House with a fine trophy of the day, some great memories and pictures and most of all utter respect for highland stalkers, who are built like mountain goats. Michael and Kurt had to do it all again the following day, I had the luxury of a day off and long sleep!

CONTACTS

The Pierhouse Hotel:

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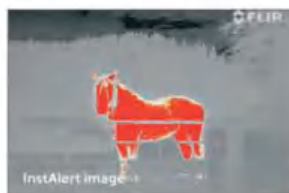
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Lens (mm): 35

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Field of View (°): 18 x 14

Video Recording: None

Zoom: 2x 4x 8x

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Range (m): 320 (TS24), 460 (TS32)

Lens (mm): 19, 2x Extender Opt.

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Field of View (°): 24 x 18

Video Recording: Pro Only

Zoom: 2x (TS32)

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Range (m): 780~2,500 w/ lens

Lens: Purchase Separately

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Field of View (°): Various

Video Recording: Yes

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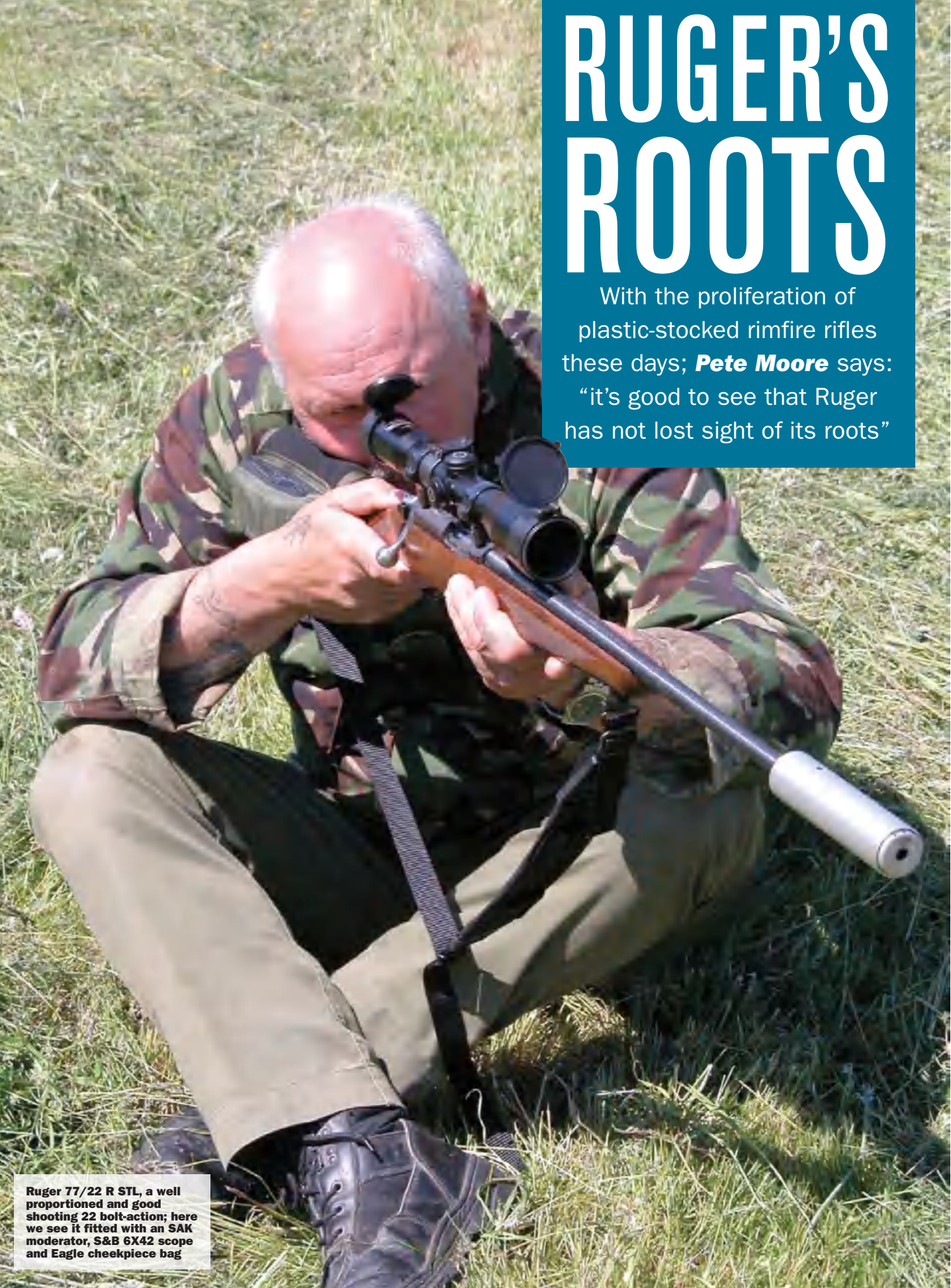
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RUGER'S ROOTS

With the proliferation of plastic-stocked rimfire rifles these days; **Pete Moore** says: “it’s good to see that Ruger has not lost sight of its roots”



Ruger 77/22 R STL, a well proportioned and good shooting 22 bolt-action; here we see it fitted with an SAK moderator, S&B 6X42 scope and Eagle cheekpiece bag

I'd have to say that I've yet to see a bad 22 Long Rifle bolt-action from the box; be it a Chinese copy of a CZ 452-2E or some upmarket Anschütz, they all seem to be able to shoot! In this they are only limited by the trigger and sight quality, providing of course they are sound and the operator knows what to do! I put most of this down to the fact that they fire a fat lead pill that swages down the small bore, so giving maximum obturation, even if the bore is bulged or less than 100%. Even an average 22 bolt-gun should be able to turn in ½-3/4" (supported) at 50 yards and easily stay on a rabbit's head at 100, which is near maximum range to place an effective killing shot.

OUTSIDE INFLUENCES

So if we accept that 22 bolt-guns can shoot, then what else influences our choice? Looks, capacity and in the majority of cases price are major factors. There are plenty of cost effective, entry-level rifles that are more than capable, but they don't feel right; in fact they feel exactly like what they are. They tend to be small and basic by design; I like a rifle that feels and looks like a rifle!

Capacity is a big issue with me too, as most makes give you 5-rounds from the box with the option of a seven or 10-shot if you want it. With few exceptions these are all of the single column style, which stick out of the action. So given my requirements I opted for Ruger's 77/22 (#7002) many years ago and have not been disappointed and I'm glad to report that even with the introduction of their more budget-priced American Rimfire, the classic, wood-stocked 77/22 is still in production; though the price has risen considerably from when I bought mine.

AROUNDTOIT

The standard 77/22 is available in walnut (7002) and polymer (7009) stock options with a 20" tube. There's also a 24" target-style version with walnut



Detail of the bolt, note the twin locking lugs positioned in the middle of the body



Note the fullbore-like layout, 3-position safety and the three scope mounting points, Ruger offer both 1" and 30mm rings; though the former are included as standard

furniture, the 7044, in truth both barrels are a bit long by British standards. Though saying that I have always meant to get it cut down to 16" but as with so many things in life; never actually got around to it! I suppose now I am used to it but will say that 4" off the tube makes for a far handier piece with no loss of ballistics! All Ruger rimfires come threaded ½ x 20" UNF as standard, which is pretty much the UK-accepted moderator fitting.

The 77/22 is styled after their fullbore M77 Mk II, so has that big rifle look and feel, and also uses the three-position safety catch of that design. Here you get forward – FIRE, middle – SAFE with bolt operation and rear – SAFE bolt locked, this control is well placed and easy to operate! Major differences are the top of the receiver is flat and not stepped as with the centrefire M77 range. It also shows three, integral scope mounting points on the receiver and a set of medium height 1" rings are included. The bolt locks up via twin lugs in the middle of the action.

10-SHOT ROTOR

Feed is by the standard Ruger 10-shot rotary magazine, which is near identical and interchangeable with their 10/22 semi-auto, though the base is flat on the 77/22 as opposed to curved. This offers the standard, flush-fit release catch at the rear of the well, though any suitable after-market extended catch can be retrofitted. They will also take a



One area where the 77/22 scores is the fact that it offers a 10-shot capacity as standard, note the flush-mounted catch at the rear of the well

25-round banana magazine if you want a bit more capacity; not sure why!

The standard Ruger 10-shot mag is reliable and I have some old ones that I got with my first 10/22 way back in 1997. These show the occasional stoppages, which is normally a failure of the ammunition rotor to turn to offer up the last couple of rounds. A strip down and clean and re-tension of the spring cures this. South Yorkshire Shooting Supplies offer a magazine maintenance kit that allows you to do this. The 7002 comes with a low-combed, walnut, Sporter-style stock with chequering at forend and pistol grip, a slim rubber butt pad and QD sling studs as standard.

PRE-FLIGHT

Years ago Ruger triggers were OK but not amazing, well that's how it was when I got mine, though things seem to have improved since then. The one in mine was adequate I swapped it for one of the proprietary drop-in units from Dayton Traister, which offers sear engagement adjustment too. Equally I could

FOR

Solid, well made and shootable
Feels like a fullbore
Good standard capacity

AGAINST

Barrel a bit long for UK use
Mag change a tad slow

VERDICT

A proper 22 rimfire
Pricey by comparison

► have used one from Rifle Basixs. Unlike Savage, Marlin or even CZ, which use spring kits to improve control, the Ruger requires a completely new blade.

This does need fitting, as there's an integral shelf on its right side that needs to be reduced in height to allow the 3-way safety to work correctly. An easy job if you have the skills, but take too much metal off and the gun will fire no matter where the safety catch is positioned. So if you're not happy, get a competent gunsmith to do the work, as with un-skilled hands it's all too easy to turn that replacement lever into a piece of useless metal!

I shoot sub-sonic hollow points exclusively through my rifle, as and like most UK rimfires, it's fitted with a moddy all the time. Though it performs well with just about any make of 22 Long Rifle ammo; two brands it really likes are Winchester and CBC/MagTech. It seems to do best with the Winchesters and will shoot ½" at 50 yards supported with and a tad more with the CBC. What I really like about both makes is the huge, bucket-nosed hollow point cavity on offer, which really rolls over the bunnies and hares!

Over the years I have chopped and changed glass and moderators, as this rifle is also used for testing. Currently it's wearing Hawke's latest Vantage IR 3-9x50 Rimfire model, which has a BDC (bullet drop compensating) ladder reticule cut for 22 subs and it works. The moddy is an A-TEC Wave, but for many years I used the old benchmark SAK can. A final item is an Eagle cheekpiece bag; apart from raising the comb height a little, the zipped side pouch holds



Goldilocks Rimfire – not too big, not too small and just about right



The Hawke Vantage IR 3-9x50 offers a 22-sub-sonic dedicated BDC reticule which really works!

four loaded magazines easily and a few tools etc. I prefer this to fumbling around in my pocket for a spare mag, especially when shooting from a vehicle!

RABBIT, HARE AND FOX

Depending on what I am doing with the 77/22 a bipod is optional, I used to use a Harris BRS but have recently changed to the Javelin Super-Lite Standard unit from Spartan Precision Equipment. It uses a screw-on socket with a magnetic attachment system and is seriously light, meaning I can plug the pod in when needed, if not it's in my pocket

out of the way! Though a well sized rifle, the Ruger is neither that big nor heavy and a lovely piece for walk and shoot tactics. I am also a big fan of 17HMR and have a stainless/laminate Ruger 77/17 All-Weather, and use it a lot more for rabbits and hares these days, as it gives me near twice the reach of the 77/22. Saying that I still reckon that if I had only one choice of Rimfire it would be 22 Long Rifle! With a 40-grain sub-sonic the rifle/cartridge combo is capable of taking rabbits and hares up to 100 yards and is good medicine for foxes at closer ranges. The cub in the picture was taken down at 40 yards with a Winchester sub.

ALL GOOD!

In use the 10-round, flush-fitting magazine gives a good firepower edge without any penalties, as the whole thing is inside the rifle. Mag changes, certainly with the standard release catch, can be a bit awkward with heavy gloves on, so an extension is not a bad idea. The three-position safety catch is good, as it allows you to eject a live round from the chamber knowing that the trigger can't be operated. Ruger's dedicated scope mounts are good and come in three heights and in 1" and 30mm options. However there's no provision for accepting a Weaver-type base short of gunsmithing, so makes fitting most NV scopes problematic!

“What I really like about both makes is the huge, bucket-nosed hollow point cavity on offer”



Apart from rabbits and hares the 22 Rimfire is good, close range medicine for foxes, as this cub discovered to its cost

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

■ Name	Ruger 77/22 #7002
■ Calibre	22 Long Rifle
■ Capacity	10 (DM)
■ Action	Bolt
■ Barrel	20" Threaded ½" UNF
■ Stock	Walnut Sporter
■	QD sling studs
■ Prices	£1108
■ Contact	Viking Arms Ltd, 01423 780810 CBC/MagTech ammo - Viking
■ Contacts	Winchester 22 subs - BWM Arms Ltd, 01235 514 550 Javelin Bipods - Spartan Precision Equipment, +44 (0)1892 300220 A-TEC Wave moderator - Jackson Rifles, 01644 470223 Hawke Vantage IR 3-9x50 Rimfire scope - Deben, 01394 387762



An old acquaintance

I used to watch him regularly every summer over the course of several years; a stag with an interesting rack of antlers that would always stay a while on his way from his winter habitat to the places where he reigned during the most enthralling season of the year – the mating season. It was interesting to watch as the shape and thickness of his antlers gradually changed, even emphasised by the velvet in the period of growth. He was an old acquaintance of mine and I always looked forward to our next encounter.



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Hanging Around

Howard spends weeks trying to bring to book a problem fox, only to come up empty handed.

The time has come to take my (some people say out dated) Maxi Kite N.V. out of mothballs and put it back on my Tikka 243. I don't think they're out dated; yes there are a lot of N.V. scopes out there now, some good, some not so much and the Maxi Kite is a bit of a lump to carry round clamped to a rifle! But like anything else it has its pros and cons and all I can say is anything you can see during the day light hours, you can see at the dead of night with the Maxi Kite with no IR, unless it's in heavy foliage.

PROS & CONS

However and unlike some N.V. that eat batteries and each time you switch them on you have to wait for them to warm up before you can see any kind of a picture; the Maxi

Kite's two AA batteries last forever! As soon as I switch it on I can see instantly; so no missed chances. Which is great when I use a Cluson Clu-brite lamp with a lanyard attached to first pick up eye shine, before dropping the lamp to switch over to the Maxi Kite, watching the fox's every move, bringing it in closer by calling. The only problem is it means the rifle is for foxing-only, leaving me one rifle short as a good all rounder.

It didn't matter when I had my Tikka 223 but I needed the cash at the time, so sold it on and I've kicked myself ever since; now I am looking for a replacement. The reason I've switched from lamp to N.V. is one of the local farms has a problem fox, which has run the gauntlet and survived and is very cautious. So much so it won't even come to an area that's been baited up, given they are opportunist feeders this means it's a serious problem!

LITTLE SEEN

The only sightings have been glimpses of it in the car headlights or a shadow as it enters or

leaves the farm yard, as it keeps close to the buildings. A few people have tried to bring it to book by changing the times of their patrols, only for the fox to do the same. Also, snares can't be used due to the livestock and the ground being so open, it's down to me to sort it out; hence the Maxi kite coming out of moth balls.

Along with my N.V. rifle I have a portable hide to shield me from eyes and the weather, the only thing is I can't do anything about is the wind. If it's blowing the wrong way, my quarry will pick up my scent and won't put in an appearance, how long and how many nights I will have to put in is any body's guess and even the comfiest of chairs will start to get uncomfortable after a while!

I hate waiting, but the rewards are well worth it, I keep telling myself, as I think I'll just wait another hour. When I think of the hours I've put in doing just that, only for the wind to shift direction, causing me to pack up just as I felt something was about to show is untrue. But this is what it's all about, using your knowledge, skill and some luck, did I say luck?



CRAFTY AS A FOX

Up to the time this article went to print this fox is proving to be so hard to bring to book I can only compare it with one I stumbled on late one afternoon. Every man and his dog, rifle, shotgun and snare had tried but failed. Every Christmas for three years this particular fox had killed practically all the turkeys on a small farm. I almost making the owner bankrupt. Apart from feeding and keeping them warm, if you disappoint your customers, they won't be coming back next year, that's for certain.

Situations like this make it a little more personal and more frustrating when things don't go to plan, that's where that little bit of luck comes in, something that I am lacking at the moment. To give you an idea of what I've gone through up to now, on my first and second night I saw nothing but they were very quiet and still, with barely a breath of wind. Later that week I changed position and still nothing, a thought started going through my mind, if this fox is that spooky, had it noticed my hide? With it being something different, was it giving it a wide birth, as it was with any bait that was put out?

GETTING FAMILIAR

When using a cage trap, I would sometimes have to put it out and leave it for a few weeks un-baited, to allow the fox to pluck up the



Open ground but not flat; there are plenty of dips where the fox could pass undetected



The portable hide/seat is quite a lump but what a setup for an ambush, as you've got cover, comfort and concealment

courage to get closer and have a good sniff round and inspect it. Leaving the trap's door propped open, it can enter and leave if it wants; if the ground is hard, putting down some sand near it, it makes it easy to tell what's been near and even the direction its been travelling. Ordinary building sand will do, as it's quite dense, so it's easy to tell what's left any tracks left in it.

All this prior to baiting the trap, just to build their confidence up, so if it works with the trap I have nothing to lose by leaving my hide set up, as long as it's pegged down tight against the wind. The last thing I wanted to do was to go anywhere near the

hide for at least a week, remember the idea is to show the fox it has nothing to fear. So if it were to pick up my scent anywhere near the hide, then the whole exercise would be a waste of time.

PROPER PREP

Preparation is everything and can make the difference of sitting waiting for night after night, to being successful on the first night. While the fox is hopefully getting used to the hide I can be doing something else (all makes sense to me) pity I never thought of doing it sooner, as I've already spent hours over the past four weeks. But its luck can't last forever (or can it?) it's possible it could slip by in between me looking through the scope every few minutes and I wouldn't even know it.

There is another thing I could try and that is while I leave my hide there for the crafty old fox to get used to, I could try and ambush it on a neighbouring farm. This would call for a different tactic, as I daren't use a lamp. I could walk the ground with the rifle unloaded, stop and rest the rifle on the sticks while I use the N.V. to spot him, before chambering a round, that way I won't be swinging a loaded rifle round wily nilly. I'll let you know how I get on...



Forsaking his lamp Howard dug out his old Maxi Kite as this was one seriously shy and cunning fox!



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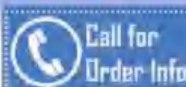
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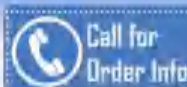


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Abbreviations Explained

SP - Soft Point
 PSP - Pointed Soft Point
 SPBT - Soft Point Boat Tail
 PSPBT - Pointed Soft Point Boat Tail
 SPRN - Soft Point Round Nose
 FSP - Flat Soft Point
 HPBT - Hollow Point Boat Tail
 FPJ - Flat Point Jacket
 FMJ - Full Metal Jacket
 FMJRN - Full Metal Jacket Round Nose
 FMJBT - Full Metal Jacket Boat Tail
 RNFP - Round Nose Flat Point

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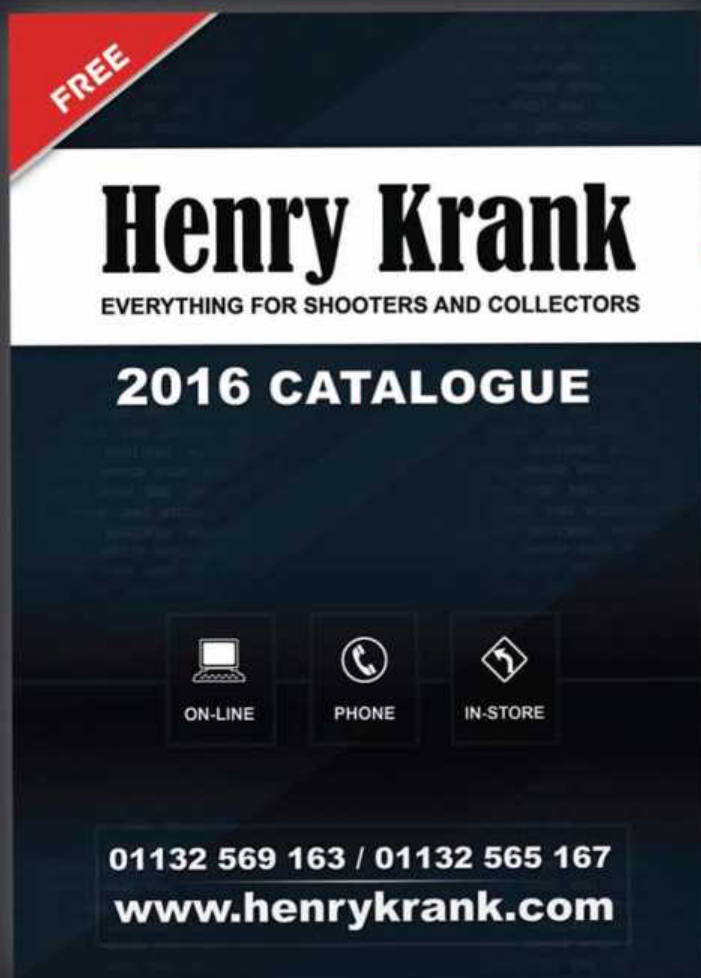
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THE GOLD STANDARD

Chris Parkin continues his look at precision disciplines, with the longest test for the Benchrest shooter - 1000 yards

After discussing 100 and 600 yard Benchrest (BR) last year, I have finally turned my eye to what we would term as long range in the UK, the gold standard of 1000 yards. This discipline shares many of its details with the 600 yard version and is still based around an aggregate of four, 5-round groups shot throughout the course

of the day. The main differences in equipment is that 'light gun' now rises to 17lb maximum weight and a new unlimited 'heavy gun' class allows weight to be unlimited, although the rules still dictate that the rifle should lift totally clear of both front and rear rests which are not allowed to be interconnected.

PRECISION V ACCURACY

Unlike F-Class, where joystick front benchrests are used to assist multiple points of aim off for wind correction, a single solid pedestal rest with semi fixed bags, adjustable via windage and elevation dials is still appropriate here. As it's all about getting those 5-shots away as fast as possible with

Those 6 foot squares look small at 1000 yards and you only get 5-mins to fire five rounds, most competitors do it in a lot less – it's all about the window



complete control of the guns recoil within the same wind condition. The target backer at 1000 yards is approximately 6 feet square, a 4 foot square target within it.

It is generally accepted that the exact location of the group doesn't matter, as long as it can be clearly seen and measured. But it is understandable that during sighters, most competitors will try to localise their group to the centre of the target to maximise their chance of getting all the shots on fair and square, in case they drift either to the left and right of their aim point as the wind stretches the group out laterally.

Most of the vertical error is shown up with gun handling or tracking problems. Although these are large guns with calibres of increasing ferocity, they are heavy and although not quite shot totally free recoil, are certainly allowed to move a little before hitting the shooter's shoulder to arrest their progress. Differing motion in this arena shows up quickly as 'vertical' in the group and great lengths are gone to, to minimise it. Teflon tape may be applied to bearing surfaces to reduce friction, sandbags are filled with ultra-dense zircon sand (extremely heavy to deaden any movement) and the wings of the front bag can be tension adjustable at the forend. Shooters will tap the comb of their stock, often with a light rubber mallet to compress the fit between rifle and rear bag. Front bags are stored with exact replicas of their associated rifle to retain sand 'shape' inside. The details are endless.

EVERYTHING IS KEY!

The heavier and wider forend on a custom rifle further aids by minimising gun lift on firing and also twist within it as the bullet spins down the bore and therefore exerts an opposing torque on the barrel and the hence gun itself. Stability is key, tracking is key, an ultra-light trigger (often as light as 2 oz. and the firer's hand never wraps around the grip)



“Most of the vertical error is shown up with gun handling or tracking problems”

is key and the ability to lift the bolt easily and load fast also happens to be....yes, key. Custom guns will usually be single shot and some eject as normal to the right yet are loaded from the left; yes there are two ports. Big actions like the Stolle Panda are aluminium to save weight, yet guarantee massive bedding area, the stress bearing surfaces within being inlaid steel components. Stainless steel actions are common and you get the odd bottom ejector too, just too keep things fast and smooth.

Most shooters will have a raised loading block at gun level mounted on an extended arm from their front rest to hold those five, critical rounds near the port. The other area where gun torque is to be avoided is the lifting of the bolt handle to open that action, bearing in mind a string of 5-rounds will often be shot as fast as 15-20 seconds, if not



7mm BooBoo, 7mm WSM and 6mmBR are three examples of the cartridge variety shot

quicker, there is no time re-aim and all the shooter will do while reloading is slide the gun back forward against its stop (into battery). This means they want a bolt lift as light as possible, with as much physical leverage as possible, so twin-lugged actions are the most common; the handle may travel further but it applies less torque or jerkiness to that precisely positioned gun.

Interestingly, Heavy guns aren't always large calibres, the added weight often just means they can be shot faster and it is not uncommon to see them in the smaller 6mm BR and such as they are used overseas for 10-round matches too. When you see these shot at full speed, it is like a semi auto, the shooters are almost robot-like in their repetitive motions and with forends often as wide as 5 or 7", the rests used are enormous, yet they do slide like they are on rails, almost metronomic in tempo.



► CALIBRES

Benchrest is an all-inclusive sport and as well as the 308's (150-grain bullet, perhaps 2850-3050 fps, 45-grains of powder) and 6.5x55's (140-grain bullet at 2700-2900, 50-grains of powder) you might see in sporter classes, you will see a lot of smaller 6mm's like the legendary 6mm BR (105-grain bullet at 2950 fps, 32-grains of powder), its 'Improved' Dasher brother and a lot of 7mm guns like 7mm-WSM (180-grain bullet at 2800 fps, 56-grains of powder) other wildcats based on both these cases and larger, for 7mm BooBoos (180-grain bullet at 3125 fps, 70-grains of powder, fully wildcatted case from a 8x68 German parent) and any other such thing as your tongue can pronounce, AND your wallet afford the barrel life of. 6.5x284 is also seen on the more specialist factory rifles like the Savage family, who always seem to make an ideal option for specialist shooting sports and they are to be commended, as it is not unknown for one to beat a full custom.

The calibre is important but on a calm day, an accurate small gun that is shot fast will regularly win. You can shoot belted magnums and up to 8mm bore diameter is allowed but nobody really minds what you shoot because there is always that critical balance between ballistic ability and shootability to weigh up. Of course, the big boomers will always beat the constantly changing wind better but handling them, even with a muzzle brake fitted is a more tricky process and smaller calibres like the BR allow you to shoot more often and really knowing your gun can never be discounted.

IT'S ALL ABOUT A 20 SECOND 'WINDOW'

Considering the shooters of this sport will spend many hours at the reloading bench, optimising cartridges with limitless brass preparation, bullet weight sorting, powder



That's a 10-round group at 1000 yards
Photo credit: TONY LENTON



Fast reloads are almost mechanical in motion, here a 7mm WSM is in use in a left load, right eject action



Adjusting the front rest for height and alignment; here the launch pad is probably more important than the rifle!

weighing and infinitesimal detail on cartridge overall length (C.O.L.). It's amazing to see them spend a whole day often watching and waiting for wind to at least stabilise with some consistency. When they are commanded to fire, they may have five minutes to release those 5-rounds, but considering they will try to have them done within about 20 seconds, four times in the day, they will spend longer hammering their front rest feet into the concert benchtop than physically shooting the gun.

It is horses for courses and although not the sport for me, I respect the detail and effort the guys put in to achieve their goals. Requiring little physical effort (other than carry over 100 lbs of kit to the firing point), it is also a sport that can include all, welcoming those of any age or sex, able bodied or those with disabilities and is very warm and friendly; there is a LOT of time to chat on a shoot day. These days are won or lost on the change of a breath of air in that 20 second window that goes against you. You will see a new name do well every day at this sport but when you look across the results of a whole season, familiar names and faces of both wind reading and gun prep/handling continue to remain the cream of the crop.



The trigger hand never touches the grip, 2oz triggers are not unusual; yes 2oz!

WILL YOUR WEATHER GODS ALIGN?

Let's not forget those 1000 yards away in the butts who over the radio will raise and lower the targets all day, marking shots and groups, all measured to a precision centre to centre of 0.001". Everything is relayed back to the firing point and the 'wailing wall' is where shooters congregate between each match to see the joy or dismay on each other's faces as those numbers add up, the day based on the aggregate size.

To go below a 10" aggregate is a hell of a good day and that's near as dammit 1 M.O.A. so next time a shooter has an argument over accuracy versus precision, know what Benchrest really is and what it really involves! The man who actually began my writing career, Vince Bottomley set a new record over ten years ago and given that it had already stood for years, actually broke his own record within a month with a group of 2.670". This still stands TEN years on and may well do for ten more, his name forever in the record book, waiting for the Gods to align in another's favour but, as Colin Montgomery said, "the more I practice the luckier I get" so maybe you should give it a go!

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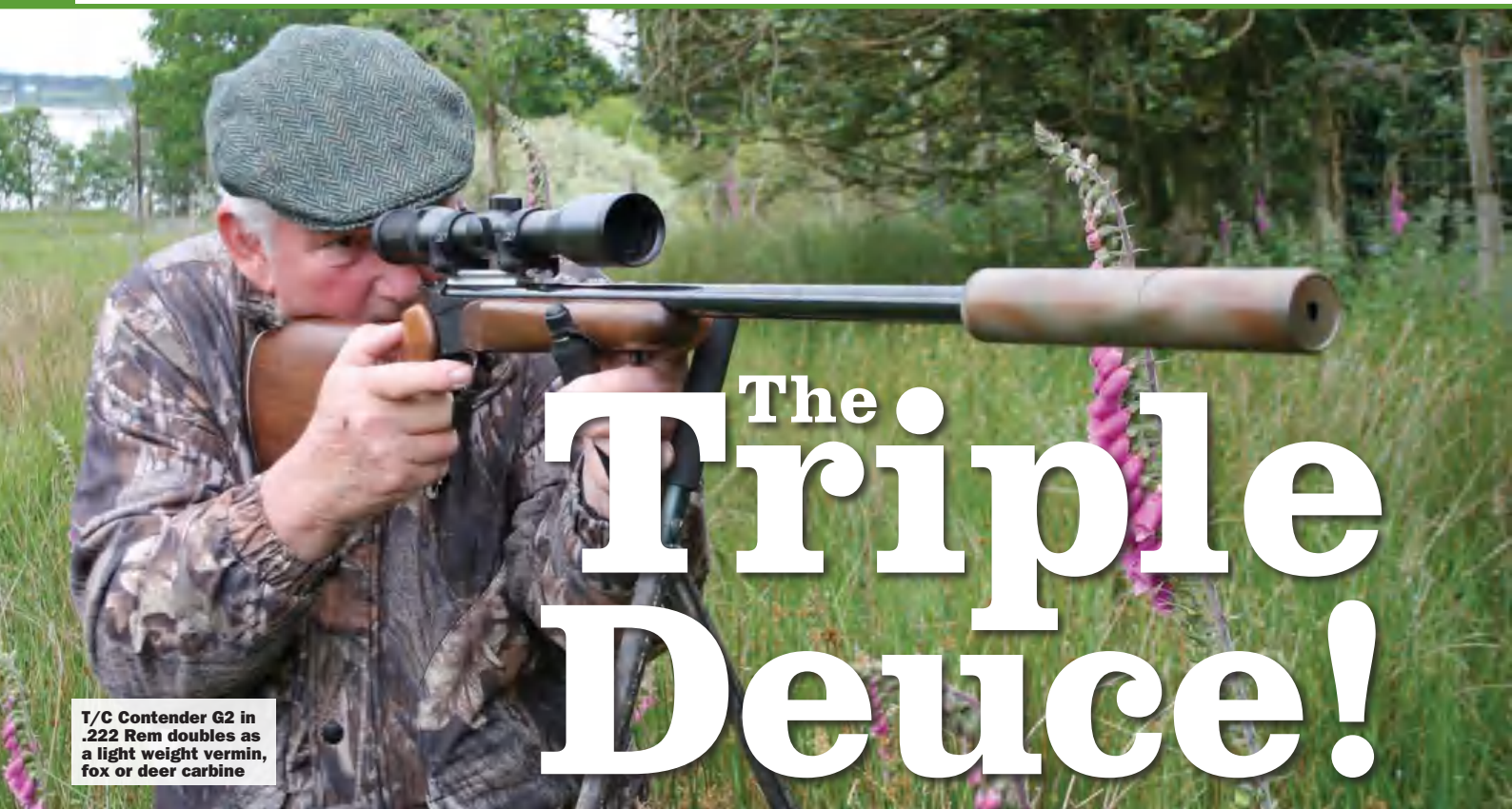


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The Triple Deuce!

Old and still bold **Bruce Potts** looks at the cartridge behind the 223 Rem and many others

I have always had a soft spot for the old .222 Rem (triple deuce), as I have owned a few over the years, from a BSA CF2 Varmint, Sako Vixens and T/C Contender Carbines. It has been eclipsed somewhat by its bigger brother the .223 Rem and competed with in regard to the 22 and 6mm PPC cartridges for accuracy. But it still remains all you need to get the job done and represents a classic and very competent vermin, fox and small deer species cartridge, perfect for British use.

MINI MARVEL

All the way back to 1950, when Remington introduced the little marvel and it was not a wildcat based cartridge, but instead was built on a different case design and thus was a unique from the floor up project, and all the better for it. There was a niche in the line of available cartridges at the time; the .22 Hornet was still enjoying popularity for short range use, whilst at the other end of the scale was the .220 Swift, a super fast, flat-shooting varmint round.

So a mild, accurate and mid-sized design, that would satisfy varmint hunters and also please even the most ardent target shooter with a fine flexible cartridge that responded well to hand-loading was a good idea. The .222 Rem performance surpassed all dreams, both in terms of accuracy, ease of reloading, light recoiling yet still possessing enough velocity for foxes at 250yds, the .222 Rem was a honey. Remington also chambered it in Model 722 bolt action, fore runner to the legendary M700 series, which provides a perfect platform to shoot small groups and it was instantly taken up by the Bench Rest boys and at the time, before the PPC rounds, had won more comps than any other cartridge.

CARTRIDGE CONFIGURATION

It's a dainty case at 1.7" long and a 27 grain max water capacity dependent on case manufacturer. What characterises the .222 is the longer than normal case neck, some 0.313" compared to that of the .223 being 0.203". This allows powder to primary burn hot in the case neck and not the throat area of the barrel and allows the bullet to be correctly and concentrically held in the case. Small details but they work and loading a triple deuce is simple.

Most factory rifles come with a 1 in 14" rifling twist that is suitable for bullets up to 55-grains but gives up the ghost at 60-grainer's. You can of course have a custom barrel of any twist rate but a slow twist barrel



No shortage of reloading equipment such as dies, bullets, cases or powder for the versatile and efficient .222 Rem



L to r:- 30gr Berger, 35gr NTX, 35gr V-Max, 40gr Nosler, 50gr Berger, 55gr Speer, 55gr Ballistic Silver Tip, 55gr Hornady SP, 55gr Sierra Game King



Factory .222 ammunition is very good quality for those shooters who do not want to reload

allows thinner jacketed bullets to work well at the desired .222 Rem velocities.

Light bullets from 30 to 50 grains are great vermin loads, whilst 50 to 55-grain loads (so long as they make 2450 fps and 1000 ft/lbs energy) are roe legal in Scotland and small species deer legal in England and Wales.

I also tried some factory ammunition I had handy and is worth keeping if you are caught short, so to speak. This Tikka liked the Remington .222 that was loaded with a 50-grain AccuTip bullet; it achieved 3076 fps and 1050 ft/lbs energy and therefore deer legal for Roe in Scotland. The Federal and Winchester 40-grain cartridges gave 3269fps and 3202fps respectively, with inch groups at 100 yards, whilst the 50-grain projectiles gave 3101 fps and 1068ft/lbs for the Federal V-Shok and 3110 fps and 1074 ft/lbs for the Winchester Supreme, both good Roe loads with a heavy soft-pointed bullet type. I had some older Sako loadings with a 55-grain bullet and they gave a velocity of 2973fps velocity and 1080 ft/lbs energy readings.

Norma 50-grain SP loads were also excellent, with 3089fps and 1060 ft/lbs energy, with lovely consistent 0.95" groups. Do anything that load; vermin, foxes and deer!

WHERE IT COUNTS

Ballistically, the .222 Rem out in the field can push a 50-grain bullet at 3214 fps with 1284ft/lbs of energy, so will still have 578ft/lbs energy at 250yds, which is more than a Hornet at 200yds. However, zeroed at 100yds that 50-grain pill will be down to minus -2.4" at 200yds and -10.8" at 300yds. Therefore, in my book although the .222 is capable of stretching your range to 300yds and has enough power behind it, because of the extra hold over needed at this longer distance, then to me, it limits it to 250yds in average hands. If you want more power or range then get a 220 Swift or .22-250 with much flatter trajectories but more potential meat damage and muzzle blast.

Its demure stature belies its abilities in terms of ballistics and it is safe to use on smaller plots of land, with minimal noise disturbance and its light recoil makes it a joy to use in the field. Just because the case capacity is on the small side does not mean the performance is likewise sedate, far from it. It's a very efficient little case, not as good

RELOADS

Tikka M55 .222 (23" barrel)

30gr to 45gr bullets

BULLET	WEIGHT	TYPE	RELOAD	VELOCITY FPS	ENERGY FT/LBS
Berger	30gr	FB Varmint	20.0gr of Allian RL 7 powder	3402	771
			20.5gr	3456	796
			21.0gr	3521	826
			22.0gr	3623	875
			23.0 gr	3756	940
Hornady	35gr	NTX	19.0gr of Vit N 110	3788	956
			22.0gr of Vit N130 powder	3511	958
			23.0gr	3573	992
Hornady	40gr	V-Max	23.0gr of RL7 powder	3684	1055
			19.0gr of Vit N 120 powder	3123	866
			20gr	3278	955
Nosler	40gr	Ballistic Tip	21gr	3435	1048
			21.5 gr of RL 7 powder	3511	1095
			19.0gr of IMR 4198 powder	3133	872
Sierra	45gr	SPT	20.0gr	3286	959
			21.5gr	3471	1070
			22.0gr of RL 10X powder	3187	1015
			23.0gr	3267	1067

50gr-55gr Bullets

BULLET	WEIGHT	TYPE	RELOAD	VELOCITY FPS	ENERGY FT/LBS
Sierra	50gr	BlitzKing	22.0gr of H322 powder	2899	933
			23.5gr	3012	1007
			24.5gr	3214	1284
Speer	50gr	SP	20.0gr of Vit N133 powder	2901	935
			21.0gr	3017	1011
			22.0gr	3183	1125
Berger	52gr	Match Varmint	20.0gr of H322 powder	2765	883
			22.0gr	2925	988
Winchester	55gr	Ballistic Silver Tip	18.0gr of RL10X powder	2766	935
			20.0gr	3049	1136
			21.0gr	3142	1206
Sierra	55gr	Gameking	20.25gr of Vit N 130 powder	3001	1100

Tikka M55 .222 Rem shot all these bullets really well, as tested over the new Steinert chronograph



► as a .22 PPC round granted but good enough for most of us. The H322 has long been regarded as the classic .222 Rem powder and performance in terms of velocity is not that far off that of H 4198 and in my experience trading sheer velocity for milder loading from my rifles in .222Rem result in better accuracy overall. Although I have to say the newer RL10X and the Vit N130 powders really performs well, with the former now being my favourite all rounder now.

For Roe these days I would go for a 55-grain Sierra Game King bullet, travelling at 3001fps from a charge of 20.25 Vit N130 powder, giving 1100ft/lbs. Obviously different rifles have their own preferences but by using quality, consistent primers such as Federal, CCI or Remington and seating the bullet just off the lands of the rifling, will certainly help to reduce overall group size.

CONCLUSIONS

This is where the .222 Rem really shines in my eyes, as in England and Wales it's a great fox round, rather understated but with enough energy to get the job done, that can also double as a small species deer rifle with the right legal loads. The same is true in Scotland, that fox rifle can also double as a very good Roe deer gun. Shots on Roe, so long as kept to sub 200yds, will result in accurate well-placed hits, with little muzzle report or noticeable recoil, thereby allowing you to successfully spot your own shots. Meat damage is also kept to a minimum, yet good controlled expansion and energy transfer are achieved by careful bullet selection, allowing for humane, one shot kills.

To sum up the .222 Rem in a nut shell, is that it has true potential for foxes at 200yds –250yds and varmints out to 300yds if you can judge that range and trajectory hold over and it is an inherently accurate little cartridge that burns frugal amounts of powder, therefore is cheap and quick to reload. There is minimal noise and it responds well to sound moderation, there is little or no kick, especially in a heavy barrelled varmint rig. Pleasingly, it also bucks the wind better than a Hornet; that's about as versatile as it gets in the shooting world, sometimes less really is more.

CONTACTS

■ Edgar Brothers	01625 613177 Hornady Reloading kit, dies, bullets
■ GMK	01489 587500 Federal & Sako ammo
■ BWM	01235 514550 Winchester bullets
■ RUAG	01579 362319 Norma ammo
■ Norman Clark	01788 579651 Reloading supplies
■ Henry Krank	01132 569163 Lee Dies, Sierra bullets



Lead-free or lead-cored, it's almost impossible to get a .222 Rem not to shoot!





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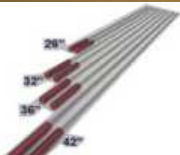
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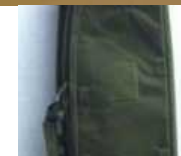
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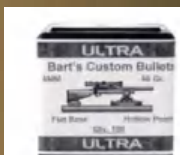
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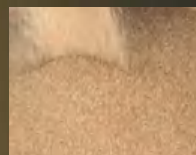
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Can you see the safety glasses Lets keep it that way?



My Lyman Turbo 1200 ancient but totally reliable



Chrony with a remote screen. A great idea!

LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT

Wheelwrite suggests some good ideas for Christmas presents for the reloader in your life; yes that's you!

Socks, aftershave and car shampoo kits? Nah, there really is more to Xmas than that. Just think of all the hand loading stuff that you keep promising yourself. As they say, a reloading press is not just for Christmas. So, how about a clean start? A vibratory case cleaner will extend the life of your brass and improve firearm hygiene. I've been using a Lyman Turbo for years; it just sits on the bench and burbles away. For moly-coating bullets my kit came with a Dillon bowl, it's smaller but just as good. Remember that most of these products are American, grey purchases may be in the wrong voltage. Something that I've not yet added to the

bench is a case media separator. Until now, I've just donned a pair of nitrile gloves, pulled handfuls of cleaned brass from the tumbler, tipped out and tapped each case and if necessary, pricked out the flash holes with a toothpick. The separator minimises much of that grief. Just make sure that the volume of the separator more or less matches that of your cleaner. Tip the whole of the contents into the separator basket and wind the handle, it's that easy. However, if you previously de-primed the brass, make sure you still check the flash holes.



If you can only afford one manual this is it!

HAPPY XMAS DARLING, I GOT YOU A JEWELLERY CLEANER

In an earlier column we looked at the micro-bubble-bath cleaner –

ultrasonic. There are now even more of them to choose from and prices are not prohibitive. If you only load a few hundred rounds a year then it could be considered a luxury item, but what the heck? My Lyman 2500 clone is busy paying for itself but Hornady and RCBS also have badged products. Do remember, this is not an ammo-dedicated tool... ultrasonic is ultrasonic, so there are bargains to be had. The selling point to the rest of the family is that it will also clean loads of other stuff around the house.

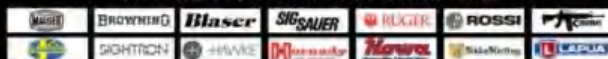
PAPER OR PDF?

I've long believed that you can never have too much loading information. The main reason is that no one source contains data on every calibre, with every practical combination of bullet and propellant that is available. The advent of fast internet has seen the growth of

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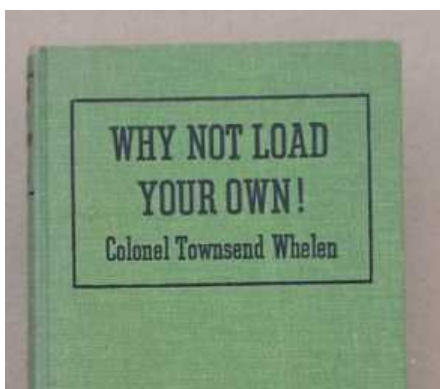


digital data from not only the well established makers of tools, bullets and powder but also commercial sites offering software based ammo design packages.

If you use more than one bullet/propellant combination in more than one firearm, then you ought to keep up to speed with at least some of these sources. For example, I only burn a few Barnes bullets and use their excellent web site as a source of downloadable pdf format data whenever I need it. I have a folder on my PC that holds all their stuff. However, I regularly use Nosler, Hornady, Speer, Norma, Lapua and Lyman too, as all of the available powder brands cross a diverse range of calibres, so it's easier to use their printed manuals. In any event, they all contain little nuggets of info unique to that publication... so read them thoroughly. If you're new to reloading, then I would always recommend starting your paper collection with Richard Lee's superb second edition of Modern Reloading. Adding one to your Xmas wish list will cost sod all.

ANCIENT AND MODERN

Most of the principles of ammo development, efficient reloading, ballistics and accurising techniques were established as much as a century ago. The only thing that has changed is the type of technology we can employ. For that reason, the writings of a number of the 19th and 20th century ammo developers and wildcatters still have great currency. The interweb now provides easy access to this wonderful back catalogue. 'Sixguns' by the late Elmer Keith is well worth getting. Yes, we're low on proper sixguns these days but it still has relevance. Those who knew him reckon he was an ace bullshitter but he offers sage advice on reloading, illustrating it with gory images of blown up guns, presumably not his own! He also illustrates interesting reloading kit from days gone by, such as Belding & Mull and Hollywood.



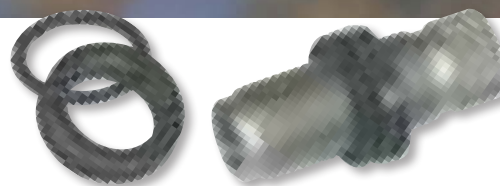
Why Not Load Your Own by Col Townsend Whelen

My collection of the writings of Col. Townsend Whelen is more or less complete. Two books are particularly relevant, the self evident 'Why Not Load Your Own' and the obliquely relevant 'Small Arms Design and Ballistics Vol II'. The former is a comprehensive course on basic reloading and for any new hand loader would make a great companion to the Lee Manual. In common with Keith, he is a fan of Lyman, Hollywood, Herters, Banta and Universal tools. The explanation of headspace is well compiled and easy to understand. He also details the difference between canister and reloader grade propellants. In both of these works he refers to the downloadable qualities of the recently departed IMR (Du Pont) SR 4759. (J.B. Hodgdon and Derek Edgar please note).

THE LITTLE THINGS THAT DO A LOT

Safety equipment is often a neglected part of the reloader's kit. A pair of impact resistant glasses may not make a fashion statement but if a feed tube of primers blows up they could leave you with working eyes... a bit of a plus on the range. Nitrile or latex gloves are recommended when handling lead products, propellants or the residues of combustion and will be equally useful next time you do an oil change on the car or paint the bathroom ceiling.

Making your loading dies self aligning in the sloppy $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 14 tpi press thread will aid ammo quality at the cost of just a few rubber O-rings. Those of you with Lee tools need not bother... they also thought of the idea and fitted them into an annulus in the locking ring. Just remember that you'll need to adjust and relcock your dies each time you screw them into the press. Best fit are medium nitrile B.S. 1806 50-813 O-rings with an 80 Shore hardness from your local engineering supplier or from the interweb.



Cheap rubber ware gives improved cartridge quality



Dillon small case separator

WHAT ABOUT A FANCY CLOCK FOR XMAS?

The polar opposite to an egg timer... a chronograph. Timing your prized load over the measured metre or yard will make ammo development a practical and rewarding proposition, especially if muzzle energy has to meet a legal requirement or you're extending the ballistic range for competition purposes. Remember, the velocity quoted in the manual for your load is quite probably as much as 7 or 8% wide of the mark, in fact, bloody near useless. It was often measured from a test receiver with a different barrel length and twist to your gun. A chrono solves that problem. If you chose a model with the display at the front of the unit, make some provision to protect it from the abrasive effects of blast residues – or better still, something that could stop a wayward bullet. It really does happen! Happy Xmas.



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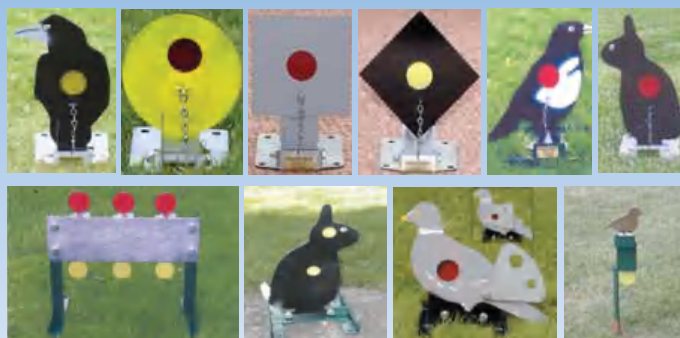
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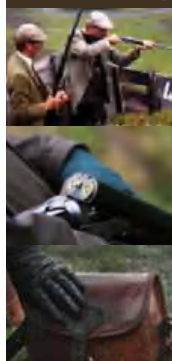
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